



# UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT AGENDA ACTION ITEM

**TOPIC:** Approval of Standard Response Protocol Manual

**SUBMITTED BY:** Gloria S. Rendon

**OF:** Associate Superintendent

**APPROVED FOR TRANSMITTAL TO SCHOOL BOARD:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE ASSIGNED FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION:** July 18, 2018

**RECOMMENDATION:** It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approve the Standard Response Protocol Manual

**RATIONALE:**

**BUDGETARY INFORMATION:**

**POLICY REFERENCE & COMPLIANCE:**



# UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

# STANDARD RESPONSE PROTOCOL

Board Presentation  
July 2018

# At United ISD.....



## District Goal #2

### **A Safe and Nurturing Environment:**

Provide a safe, nurturing, positive and secure learning environment for all stakeholders and also take proactive measures to ensure appropriate training in emergency situations.



# United ISD Commitment

As a school District, we have the responsibility to:

- Keep our students, staff and visitors safe;
- Work with our District, local and federal law enforcement agencies to maintain current and up to date practices and policies aimed at maintaining safety and efficiency;
- Keep our parents informed, in a timely (as possible) manner.



# Texas Education Code 37.108

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As per Education Code 37.108, each District shall adopt and implement a multi-hazard plan for use in the District's facilities. The plan must provide for:

1. District employee training in responding to an emergency;
2. Mandatory school drills and exercises to prepare students and employees for responding to an emergency;
3. Measures to ensure coordination with the Texas Department of State Health Services and local emergency management agencies, law enforcement, health departments and fire departments in the event of an emergency; and
4. The implementation of a required safety and security audit.

# United ISD Initiatives



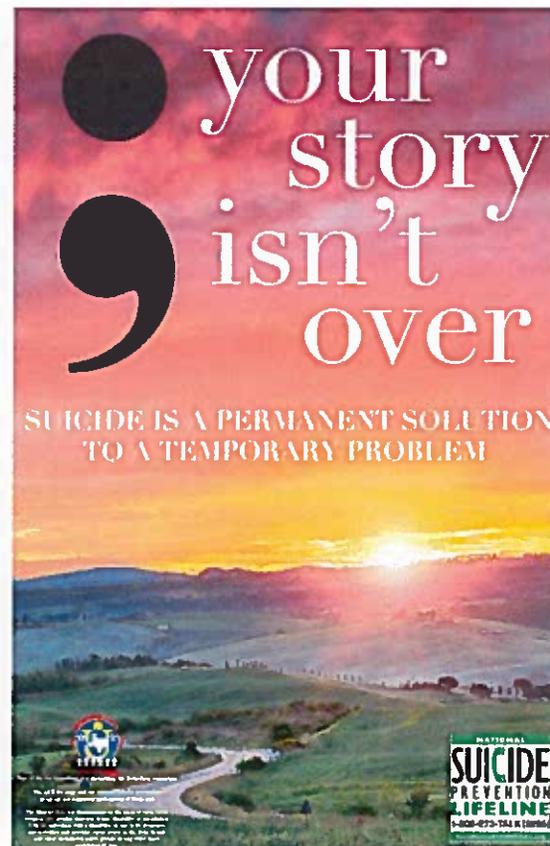
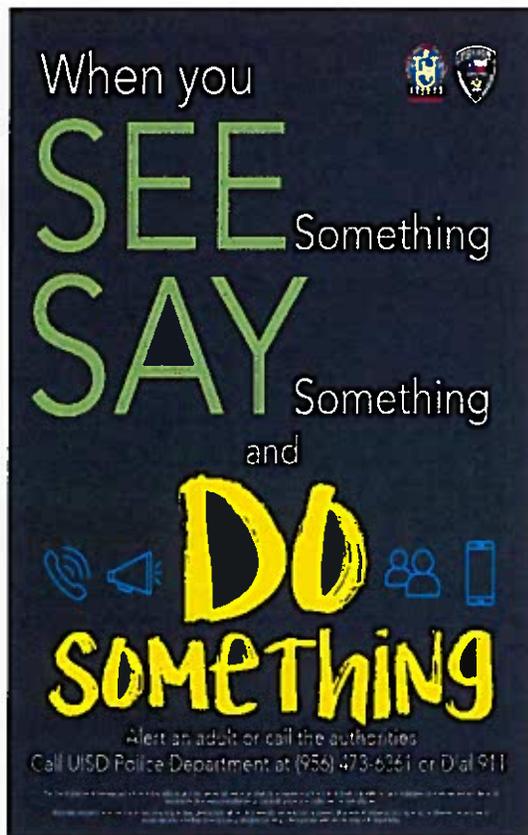
- Coordinated efforts with United ISD Police Department, Risk Management Department, and Safety Committee to revamp our multi-hazard emergency operations plan;
- Held a school safety presentation with all campus and district administrators on June 11, 2018;
- Officers and several school administrators participated in active shooter simulation trainings last month;
- Revised policies;
- Revamped District procedures:
  - ▮ After School Adventures Program dismissal;
  - ▮ Extended police presence at schools;

# United ISD Initiatives

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- Established Electronic Controlled Access Card Procedures and Guidelines;
- Established MOU's with City, County and Laredo College for Reunification plans;
- Modified MOU's with Laredo Police and Sheriff's Office for mutual cooperation;
- District Personnel/Police Department will receive training on Mental Health;
- Purchased supplies for Go Kits;
- Established training schedules for crossing guards;
- Extended invitation to local, state and federal law enforcement agencies for increased law enforcement visibility on our campuses.

# United ISD Initiatives



- See Something, Say Something, Do Something Campaign;
- Acknowledge, Care and Tell (ACT) Campaign (Mental Health Outreach Program);
- Enhancements to Mental Health Protocols/Programs.

# United ISD Initiatives

Effective the 2018-2019 school year, the District will implement a limited bag policy at athletic and fine arts events.

## LIMITED BAG POLICY



NO PURSES. NO BAGS.  
**PROHIBITED BAGS**



PROHIBITED ITEMS INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- All purses, bags or containers larger than a small clutch bag.
- Backpacks
- Computer bags
- Coolers
- Fanny packs
- Duffle bags



## APPROVED BAGS

### SMALL CLUTCH PURSE

Approximately the size of your hand, but absolutely no larger than 5.5" x 8.5" with or without a handle or strap.



**CLEAR TOTE**  
Plastic, vinyl or PVC-not exceeding 12" x 6" x 12"



**PLASTIC STORAGE BAG**  
Clear, one (1) gallon, re-sealable



To enhance public safety, United Independent School District has modified its security policy by limiting the size and style of bags allowed into events. An exception will be made for medically necessary items after proper inspection at a gate designated for this purpose. Please limit the number of items you bring to any UISD event. UISD personnel will STILL be on site to search bags at any time.

The District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, disability or association with an individual with a disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boys Scouts and other designated youth groups or any other entity prohibited by law.

# Standard Response Protocol-SRP

- Adopted common Standard Response Protocol (SRP) terminology for use across the District.
- SRP terminology used by law enforcement.
- All classrooms, hallways and District buildings will display SRP poster.
- All drills/emergency situations will follow SRP system.

## IN AN EMERGENCY WHEN YOU HEAR IT. DO IT.

### LOCKOUT! Get inside. Lock outside doors.

**STUDENTS**  
Return inside  
Business as usual

**TEACHER**  
Bring everyone indoors  
Lock outside doors  
Increase situational awareness  
Business as usual  
Take attendance



### LOCKDOWN! Locks, lights, out of sight.

**STUDENTS**  
Move away from sight  
Maintain silence  
Do not open the door

**TEACHER**  
Lock interior doors  
Turn out the lights  
Move away from sight  
Do not open the door  
Maintain silence  
Take attendance



### EVACUATE! To the announced location.

**STUDENTS**  
Bring your phone  
Leave your stuff behind  
Follow instructions

**TEACHER**  
Lead evacuation to location  
Take attendance  
Notify if missing, extra or injured students



### SHELTER! Hazard and safety strategy.

Hazard	Safety Strategy
Tornado	Evacuate to shelter area
Hazmat	Seal the room
Earthquake	Drop, cover and hold

**TEACHER**  
Lead safety strategy  
Take attendance



### HOLD! In your classroom. Clear the halls.

**STUDENTS**  
Remain in the classroom until  
the "All Clear" is announced

**TEACHER**  
Close and lock classroom door  
Business as usual  
Take attendance



# Infrastructure Safety

## Elementary Schools and High Schools

- All campuses equipped with keyless access control systems effective 2018-2019 school year.
- Allows for all exterior doors to be locked at all times.

## Middle Schools

- Middle School campuses will be equipped with access control systems during the course of the 2018-2019 school year.

# Physical and Infrastructure Safety

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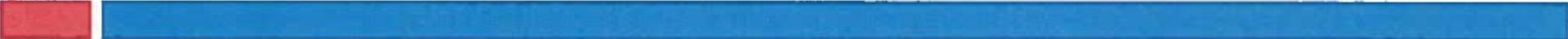
- All classroom and office interior doors locked at all district facilities;
- Magnetic strips must be in place on door frames/door latches;
- All school entry doors locked and monitored;
- All visitors screened before entering the building;
- Visitors screened through Raptor System;

# Physical and Infrastructure Safety



- 24/7 video camera monitoring;
- Security Stations under construction (Dec. 2018);
- UISD Police presence at all campuses;

# Protocol for Drills



- Campus will send a *School Messenger* Message - 10 minutes before conducting a drill (Parents must notify campus of change in phone number);
- Drills will be conducted in accordance to state mandates and District expectations.

# Communication/Reunification



- In the event of a major, catastrophic event at one of our campuses where students may need to be relocated, our students will be transported to an alternate off campus site. It is at this location that our parents will reunite with their child/children.
- School Messenger will be utilized to keep our parents informed. In addition, the District's official Website, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram Pages will be utilized to post updates.

# What's Next.....



- Integrated Response Agency meeting to be held Wednesday, July 11th at 8:30 a.m. at the SAC;
- Develop standard presentations for parents regarding District Standard Response Protocols;
- Develop Standard Response Protocol presentation for administrators to train all employees (scenarios will be included);

# What's Next.....



- Distribute safety materials to all campuses;
- Continue to meet on a monthly basis with campus Site Safety Compliance Officers;
- Continually enhance SRP manual.



# UNITED ISD

STANDARD RESPONSE PROTOCOL

WE ARE UNITED

## Introduction:

The United Independent School District is committed to the welfare of its students, staff and visitors by ensuring a safe and healthy environment within its schools and facilities. This emergency response manual has been developed to assist administrators and staff in the planning and preparing for the effective management and successful resolution of any emergency situation. Knowing what actions to take when faced with an emergency can protect life, prevent personal injuries, reduce emotional trauma, and minimize property damages.

No plan can fully anticipate all the actions required to deal with an emergency situation. However, the availability of a plan can provide a suitable framework for the effective coordination of efforts by all parties involved in an unforeseen situation. The key in dealing with any emergency is early prevention, advanced planning and training, and implementation of coordinated

response through established procedures.

For the purpose of this manual “Emergency” is defined as: “A sudden, generally unanticipated event that profoundly and negatively affects a significant segment of the school population.”

The present Standard Response Protocol Handbook is written in accordance to the Board Policy CK (LEGAL) that states the following:

*“Each school shall have effective emergency procedures that can be implemented on short notice and that will ensure optimum safety for students and school personnel.”*

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**The importance of having an organized and comprehensive strategy for responding effectively in the wake of a school tragedy cannot be underscored enough.**

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# UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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July 3, 2018

Security is a great concern for school districts across the nation. The tragic events that have occurred (in schools across the country) have prompted administrators along with district, local, state, and federal law enforcement experts to reflect and review existing practices and protocols within our district.

As a result, we along with the Board of Trustees have elected to adopt the 2018 United ISD Standard Response Protocol Manual, SRP for short. The practices and drills outlined in United ISD's SRP have been researched and reviewed by national leading experts in school safety, crisis prevention, management, and response.

The addition of the newly revised safety procedures replaces the Emergency Management Plan previously in place and supplements existing layers of security and measures (practices) already in place within our schools and facilities across the district. Utilizing the Standard Response Protocol in campuses and departments throughout the district provides everyone with the continuity and understanding of what to do should a situation arise regardless of where it should occur.

As educators, you understand the value and importance of providing students with ample opportunities to learn. We encourage you to become familiar with the terminology, responses to threats and hazards that could arise, and incorporate opportunities to exercise readiness, so that if a situation arises you and your students will be prepared.

No one person or protocol can prevent a tragedy from occurring. The Standard Response Protocol affords the district to create a culture of safety through preparation; utilizing practical methods of preparation, drills, and training. Collectively we can stand united in our efforts to provide every student, staff member, and visitor of United ISD with a welcoming, nurturing, and secure learning environment.

Best Regards,



Roberto J. Santos  
Superintendent of Schools  
United Independent School District



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**Roberto J. Santos**  
**Superintendent**

## Rationale

United ISD understands the importance of fostering an inviting environment climate and structure provide a balanced approach to implementing strong security measures while maintaining a whole environment. Promoting a positive school climate and culture is a proactive approach to prevent or deescalate a crisis.

These strategies are intended to create barriers to potential threats and delay entry of an assailant to put the school into a safe condition and allow for police to respond in an efficient and effective manner.

To ensure a safe environment United ISD has adopted the following access-control system. The U.S. Homeland Security Administration recommends that a school access-control system should incorporate these characteristics:

❑ **Access management and control.**

United ISD exercises effective access control, which requires entry to and from a school to be regulated.

❑ **Visitor Management System/Raptor.**

Visitors entering or exiting any United ISD school or facility must check in at the main office. Verifying guests who are authorized to visit the school is a fairly uniform practice.

- Screening visitors against sex-offender databases
- Monitoring who has custodial responsibility for students
- Keeping track of students who are allowed to leave school grounds.

- Recording time and attendance of volunteers and other staff members

❑ **Video surveillance.**

United ISD schools regularly monitor security cameras to increase visibility of property and systems to deter inappropriate behavior.

❑ **Panic or duress alarms.**

Alarm activation devices are used in situations to put schools in a safe condition or to alert others of an emergency.

❑ **Classroom door locks.**

All classroom doors should be equipped with keysets that lock and magnetic strip should be placed on the door. In addition, teachers shall keep on their person their district issued classroom key.

## Crisis Preparation

A *crisis* is a sudden, generally unanticipated event that profoundly and negatively affects a significant segment of the school population and often involves serious injury or death.

*Crisis management* is a proactive, organized, and well-defined response plan to a crisis situation. Such plans should give staff clear procedures to guide them in responding to, and resolving, an emergency that will likely have a profound impact on the school and community.

- ❑ United ISD SRP procedures provide benefits for students, parents, and visitors. The procedures provide an organized, systematic method of planning and preparing for the effective management and successful resolution of emergency situation.
- ❑ The availability of a plan can provide a suitable framework for the effective coordination of efforts by all parties involved.
- ❑ School and district administrators and Campus Emergency Response Team (CERT) members should maintain an up-to-date copy of their district's manual in their offices.
- ❑ Campuses shall keep a master list of student with parent contact information in a centralized location. Classroom teachers are expected to keep a roster of each class with parent contact information in the UISD Go-Kit.
- ❑ Insert building floor plans and information about all utility connections in each school's manual. Central office/UISD Police should have copies of all building floor plans.
- ❑ At least once every year (preferably twice a year), at each site, conduct in-service training and review emergency procedures.
- ❑ Practice or drill emergency response using school safe conditions (for example, lockdown or evacuation) either as per state law or district guidelines.
- ❑ Copies of this manual have been provided to United ISD School Board Members, local law enforcement, fire, emergency response, and emergency management agencies.

- ❑ The Office of the Superintendent in collaboration with the UISD Police and Risk Management will be responsible for disseminating district-level information regarding the Standard Response Protocol.
- ❑ Risk Management will ensure that Campus Site Safety Officer is trained periodically throughout the school year.

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**81% of the time at least one person had prior knowledge of a planned attack and 59% of the time more than one person had knowledge.**

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## Transition Model to Return

Students who have threatened violence upon others or themselves may be placed in an alternative setting. It is important to monitor his/her progress and ensure that steps are in place to transition the student back to his/her campus or facilitate transfer to another UISD campus.

### Step 1. Assign campus personnel to maintain communication with Alternative Campus/Facility

Inquire details about academic progress and behavior

### Step 2. Alternative campus MUST advise a student's home campus at least a week before a student returns.

- Home campus administrator in collaboration with the Office of the Superintendent will determine if returning to the home campus is the best placement for student.
- Consider factors leading up to placement.

Return to Home Campus

Transfer

### Step 3. Collaborate with campus staff and UISD PD staff to create a Safety Transition Plan.

Schedule  
Lunch  
Drop Off/Pick Up  
Personal Belongings (i.e. backpack)  
Transportation  
Contract  
CAPS/Counseling

### Step 4. The Office of the Superintendent will make contact with receiving campus administration.

Determine appropriate plan of action.

The key to ensuring a smooth transition is:

Frequent Contact with all stakeholders.

**Monitor - Monitor- Monitor- Monitor - Monitor- Monitor**

# Preparing for a Crisis

## In this section

- Are you prepared?
- Crisis Management Components
- Standard Response Protocol Poster
- Crisis Management Policy
- Emergency Response Teams
- District Emergency Response Team
- Incident Command System
- Campus Emergency Response Team

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## Are you Prepared?

Communities trust schools to be safe and secure for students and staff. Unfortunately, schools across the country (and the world) may be touched by a crisis at any time.

### **Are you prepared?**

Knowing what to do when faced with crises can be the difference between chaos and calm – or even life and death. The first step in preparing is to accept that a wide range of emergencies can happen anywhere. The second is to complete a risk assessment to prioritize school response to various emergencies. School crisis response can no longer be delegated solely to members of a school or district emergency response teams. Today, all educators are responsible for crisis management.

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## Crisis Management Components

The following are components of the United ISD Standard Response Protocol

- ❑ **Policy and Leadership**

Policy provides both a foundation and a framework for action. Leadership is necessary to ensure effective implementation of plans and maintenance of up-to-date preparation efforts. While the District Emergency Response Team (DERT) serves as the primary point of contact for emergencies, Campus Emergency Response Teams serve at the forefront at their respective sites.

- ❑ **City of Laredo Hazard Mitigation Plan**

United ISD works collaboratively with the City of Laredo and various entities throughout the city, county, state, and federal government on events that affect the city/county. Members of United ISD DERT serve at the forefront for this organization.

- ❑ **United ISD Standard Response Protocol (SRP):**

Individual building plans that operate within the framework of the district's SRP. The United ISD Standard Response Protocol outlines the district approved organizational systems that

include the person in charge and the line of succession, staff roles and responsibilities, and the coordinated responses for managing emergencies.

- ❑ **Emergency Response Teams (ERT)**

To manage a variety of school and district emergencies, United ISD has formed both Campus and District ERTs. These teams provide a network to support action when crisis occur.

- ❑ **Communication**

An important role in the foundation of any crisis planning, implementation, management, and recovery effort. The DERT in collaboration with the Office of the Superintendent serves as the primary contact for training, disseminating information, and updating of the SRP.

- ❑ **Training**

Preparation for and response to crisis rely on a firm understanding policies and procedures and knowing what to do at the outset of an emergency by all United ISD personnel. This is achieved through training and drills. Training creates the cultural condition that practice is important and demonstrates

teamwork needed during the crisis. Maintaining preparedness is an ongoing process, which involves conducting ongoing training and drills, performing periodic reviews, updating, and debriefing after each incident.

# IN AN EMERGENCY WHEN YOU HEAR IT. DO IT.

## LOCKOUT! Get inside. Lock outside doors.

### STUDENTS

Return inside  
Business as usual

### TEACHER

Bring everyone indoors  
Lock outside doors  
Increase situational awareness  
Business as usual  
Take attendance



## LOCKDOWN! Locks, lights, out of sight.

### STUDENTS

Move away from sight  
Maintain silence  
Do not open the door

### TEACHER

Lock interior doors  
Turn out the lights  
Move away from sight  
Do not open the door  
Maintain silence  
Take attendance



## EVACUATE! To the announced location.

### STUDENTS

Bring your phone  
Leave your stuff behind  
Follow instructions

### TEACHER

Lead evacuation to location  
Take attendance  
Notify if missing, extra or injured students



## SHELTER! Hazard and safety strategy.

### STUDENTS

Hazard	Safety Strategy
Tornado	Evacuate to shelter area
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### TEACHER

Lead safety strategy  
Take attendance



## HOLD! In your classroom. Clear the halls.

### STUDENTS

Remain in the classroom until  
the "All Clear" is announced

### TEACHER

Close and lock classroom door  
Business as usual  
Take attendance



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# EN UNA EMERGENCIA

## CUANDO OIGAS ESTAS INSTRUCCIONES, SÍGUELAS.

### LOCKDOWN (CIERRE DE EMERGENCIA): BLOQUEO DE PUERTAS, LUCES APAGADAS, FUERA DE LA VISTA.

#### ESTUDIANTES

Desplázate a un lugar donde no se te vea  
Guarda silencio  
No abras la puerta

#### DOCENTES

Bloquee las puertas interiores con los cerrojos Apague las luces  
Desplácese a un lugar donde no se le vea  
No abra la puerta  
Guarde silencio  
Pase lista



### LOCKOUT (ACCESO BLOQUEADO): CONFIRMAR QUE EL ÁREA ALREDEDOR DEL EDIFICIO ES SEGURA.

#### ESTUDIANTES

Regresa al edificio  
Continúa con la rutina del salón

#### DOCENTES

Lleve adentro a todos  
Bloquee las puertas de los alrededores  
Manténgase alerta sobre lo que ocurre en su entorno  
Continúe con la rutina del salón  
Pase lista



### EVACUATE (EVACUACIÓN): A UN LUGAR DETERMINADO

#### ESTUDIANTES

Lleva tu teléfono  
Deja el resto de tus cosas donde estén  
Sigue las instrucciones

#### DOCENTES

Dirija la evacuación al lugar de reunión  
Pase lista  
Notifique si faltan estudiantes, si hay estudiantes de más, o si tiene estudiantes heridos



### SHELTER (BUSCAR RESGUARDO): ESTRATEGIA DE SEGURIDAD Y PARA SITUACIONES DE RIESGO

#### ESTUDIANTES

Riesgo	Estrategia de seguridad
Tornado	Evacua a un área resguardada
Materiales peligrosos	Sella el salón
Terremoto	Tírate al suelo, cúbrete y mantente en esa posición

#### DOCENTES

Dirija la estrategia de seguridad  
Pase lista



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## Crisis Management Policy

United ISD Board of Trustees in collaboration with the Office of the Superintendent shall annually adopt and implement the United ISD Standard Response Protocol.

The Standard Response Protocol Handbook, which reflect current both local and legal policies. Any revisions to this document shall be updated and disseminated in a timely manner.

The Office of the Superintendent in collaboration with the DERT shall update, maintain, and present adopted material.

Once a district policy on crises is established, the Office of the Superintendent will be responsible for presenting the adopted material and corresponding procedures to District Emergency Response Team and Administration.

## Zero-Tolerance Policies

*Zero-tolerance policies* are the rule in most school districts in response to student misbehavior. The public no longer tolerates threats as jokes, whether it is in airport security lines or on the school playground.

However, conscientious school boards and administrators realize that what constitutes a zero-tolerance offense for a kindergartner varies greatly from that for a high school student.

It is important for zero tolerance to be well defined at each grade level – as well as for special needs students – so the school board and district do not find themselves in the embarrassing position of defending a response defined by a policy that makes little common sense in application.

## Emergency Response Teams (ERT)

Emergency Response Teams (ERT) consist of organized groups of district and school staff trained in implementing the response protocols established in the district or school's City of Laredo Hazard Mitigation Plan.

It is the role of both campus and district ERTs to consider the health, safety, welfare of students and staff, and keeping parents informed when dealing with a crisis.

The intent of ERTs is to prepare, plan, and train all staff on how to prepare and assess emergency situations.

ERT should be established at the beginning of each year and meet at least twice a year to review and discuss current policy, practices, and procedures in the SRP.

### United ISD Standard Response Protocol Order of Hierarchy



## District Emergency Response Teams (DERT)

While school or building CERTs are in the best position to prepare for and respond to crises at their specific site, critical incidents do not occur in a vacuum.

DERT provides invaluable district-wide support and is comprised of key staff, community, and student leaders, as well as representatives from local law enforcement and emergency response agencies.

DERT will meet with the Office of the Superintendent and the Office of Communication periodically through the year, and as needed during a crisis.

The DERT shall include but is not limited to:

- Superintendent
- Associate/ Assistant superintendent(s)
- Director for Risk Management
- Risk Management Safety Officers
- Campus Administrators
- UISD Police
- Health Services Director

## DERT- Goals, Roles, & Responsibilities

### Goal of the District Emergency Response Team

- Forge community relationships before a crisis occurs
- Serve as a sounding board and planning review committee
- Provide assistance with planning, coordination, and training
- Help clarify the division of duties in a crisis
- Help foster community dialogue about safety
- Identify community-oriented, proactive approaches to preventing tragedies
- Assist in communicating with various media outlets during a crisis.

### Role of the District Emergency Response Team

The impact on one building may be felt throughout the entire school system and community. Therefore, the DERT exists to:

- Respond to incidents that affect multiple building sites or the entire district.

- Support CERTs in the event of a critical incident.
- Serve as lead ERT in a catastrophic event:
  - Operate communication command center.
  - Handle mass communication and media.
  - Organize volunteers and donations.
  - Serve as liaison with other agencies and intervention teams.

### Responsibilities of the District Emergency Response Team

- Initiate district's Standard Response Protocol (SRP)
- Define clear crisis roles for central office and auxiliary staff.
- Train, assist in planning of school- and building-level CERTs.
- Lead efforts to identify both internal and external hazards that may require protective actions.
- Make policy and procedures recommendations.
- Be on call for all crises – district and building.

- ❑ Establish and communicate school safe conditions and safety precautions and procedures.
- ❑ Develop and provide regular crisis management and multi-hazard training for district and school personnel through CERTs.
- ❑ Evaluate crisis response actions and coordinate debriefing sessions.
- ❑ Mitigate incident recovery efforts.

## Incident Command System (ICS)

All United ISD schools, and buildings shall implement ICS, and all personnel assigned a specific area of responsibility during a crisis. All staff shall be trained through the School Site Compliance Officer. The Department of Risk Management according to their assigned role, and participate in drills aligned with Standard Response Protocol.

Response to every critical incident requires a clear chain of command among all responders. Within the Standard Response Protocol, specific procedures and tasks are delegated to staff to successfully manage a crisis.

Assigning specific areas of responsibility to members of the CERT gives each member the opportunity to specialize in managing his/her area.

While the ICS identifies roles for the Campus Emergency Response Team members, all school staff should have an organized reporting system that lists their specific responsibilities during an emergency.

Teachers with students in class will have specific responsibilities, as will teachers who are not assigned a class when an emergency occurs.

Critical functions of the ICS include:

- ❑ **Incident Commander**  
(Campus Principal/Department Head) will serve as the Incident Commander (IC). He/she has the overall responsibility for managing the incident by establishing objectives, planning strategies, and implementing Standard Response Protocols.
- ❑ **School Site Safety Compliance Officer**  
Usually assigned by the principal, the Liaison Officer acts as the direct contact between the Incident Commander and emergency responders. The Liaison Officer also serves as backup to the Principal/Department Head.

## Campus Emergency Response Team (CERT)

This team consists of the school or building administrators, teachers, and support staff. The principal or building administrator serves as the team leader or Incident Commander (under the Incident Command System) for the site. Other team members may include:

- Assistant principal(s)
- School Counselor(s)
- School Site Compliance Officer
- School nurse
- Principal's secretary
- Lead custodian
- Teachers & Staff
- UISD Campus Police (s)
- Security Officer (s)
- Cafeteria manager

It is important to assign the management of critical roles in the ERTs to 2 or 3 "substitute" or "back-up" people to ensure coverage at all times. This may require some people to be responsible for more than 1 task, but only if the primary assignee is out of the building.

## Campus Emergency Response Team (CERT)

### Responsibilities of Campus Emergency Response Team

The CERT Team, under the leadership of the principal is responsible for the following:

- ❑ Implement district emergency operations and recovery plan for school or building needs.
- ❑ Establish a systematic approach for identifying, referring, and intervening with students identified as at-risk for suicide or destructive behaviors.
- ❑ Orienting staff to procedures and training to fulfill designated roles, including conducting drills.
- ❑ Provide information to students, staff and community on Crisis Management referral procedures.
- ❑ Define clear emergency response roles for all school and building staff.
- ❑ Manage incidents that occur at or impact the school. These events require intervention from school district or emergency response personnel.
- ❑ Conduct regular safety assessments or security audits of school or building.
- ❑ Coordinate in-service training and drills for staff and students.
- ❑ Communicate school safety precautions and procedures to parents.
- ❑ Evaluate emergency response actions and coordinate debriefing sessions with staff (except when the DERT is involved).

## Establishing CERT

Establishing key members within a campus/department is essential in the process of preparing, planning, and executing United ISD's SRP. CERTs should be comprised of individuals who understand the role of responsibilities a CERT member is responsible for and is willing to assist with the functions needed in a crisis situation.

Name	Role
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Alternates should always be in place for CERT members. Campuses should also consider assigning additional staff not assigned to CERT to Special Education Classrooms, Early Childhood Classrooms, and/or classrooms with students who may need assistance.

---

**PROTECT** life  
**PREVENT** the incident from getting worse.  
**PROTECT** assets.

---

## School Emergency Management

Emergency management is a continuous process requiring regular review and revisions. Good plans are never finished. They can always be updated based on experience, research, and changing climates of incidents that occur.

Too many potential scenarios exist to develop contingency plans for every known or as yet unknown scenario. The responses may be so detailed that school staff is unlikely to remember all that is expected of them in a crisis.

Instead, an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) should focus on what schools must be ready to do in response to an emergency as opposed to identifying all of the sources of the threat. In other words, the number of possible responses is much less than the number of potential disasters that would require a response.

### Standard Response Protocol Objectives

**The *Standard Response Protocol*, defines the Incident Command System and roles and responsibilities for staff responding to a crisis or emergency. In this section, we will outline the best approaches and steps to develop your school's ICS.**

- Protect the safety and welfare of students, staff, and visitors.
- Provide for a coordinated response to emergencies.
- Protect the district's facilities and properties.
- Restore normal conditions in a timely manner.
- Provide for the interface and coordination between school sites and the district's Incident Command System (ICS).
- Provide for the interface and coordination between the district's EOC and the city or county EOC.

## Helpful Notes to Staff:

Lessons learned from school emergencies highlight the importance of preparing school staff to initiate emergency operations plans when an incident occurs. Schools play a key role in initiating preventive and protective measures to reduce the likelihood of an incident or its impact should it occur.

Planning will help keep students and staff safe. To do this, schools must develop response systems that are conceptual in nature, but address such issues as:

- What is the “command” structure for responding to a crisis?
- Who should lead the crisis response in a particular school or building?
- How will school staff be organized for different crisis responsibilities?
- What will communication look like? And to whom? How often?

## Annual Startup Procedures for Schools

To be most effective, annually update your crisis plan and have it ready to use when school begins in the fall.

Some additional tasks to ensure a safe environment for students are:

- Confirm membership of the DERT, Incident Command System, and CERTs. Share updated list with school DERT and Office of the Superintendent.
- Update staff phone contact information.
- Set a District Emergency Management Team and Site Safety Compliance Meeting at the start of school, and at least 2 additional meetings (1 per semester) during the school year to review procedures, especially critical incidents.
- Check contents of each school's Emergency Go Kit, and replace any items missing or needing replacement.
- Provide a refresher of Universal Emergency Response Procedures (school safe conditions) for all staff. Pay special attention to new staff to ensure they are informed about the school's intervention, crisis response, and referral processes.
- Review policies and codes with parents at Back-to-School Nights and Open Houses. Convey the importance of Standard Response Protocol and share District created PSA.
- Hold a safety assembly for students.
- Provide each staff member with a campus map with Specialized Instruction Classrooms labeled (i.e. Special Ed Classroom, Content Classrooms, etc.)
- Compile a list of all students who participate in Special Education Program listing specific disability and assigned teacher. IF a particular student requires additional assistance/accommodations please add this to the list.
- Create a list of personnel with training (i.e. AED, CPR, CPI, etc.) and send lists to Risk Management Safety Officer.

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## Standard Code of Practice: Drills

**Standardizing the manner in which the district conducts drills will provide students with a standard set of procedures they are familiar with.**

Administrators shall send a School Messenger 10 minutes before conducting ANY kind of drill. (see Script)

Communicate drills with your UISD PD Officer who will communicate his/her Sector Sergeant.

Middle School and High School – Conduct LOCKDOWN Drill after the first two weeks of school. Elementary within the first month.

Conduct drills at all hours of the day. History shows that most Active Shootings have occurred during the morning hours.

Teachers will play a vital role in communicating what to expect, what to do, and what could happen.

DO NOT give advance notice to students or make drills public.

Post drill: Conduct Evaluation Assessments of drills with teachers during the next staff meeting include UISD PD Officer/Security Personnel.

Once an ALL CLEAR is given and students return to their classroom debrief students with immediate observations.

### Administrators:

Admin Say on School Public Announcement: LOCKDOWN! LOCKDOWN! LOCKDOWN!

Radio UISD PD notify them of LOCKDOWN

Telling what the nature of the incident is as much as possible (i.e. man with a weapons in the office area)

Admin: Call 6361 providing as much details about the incident as possible.

Secure all visitors in the office, locking the door, and take cover.

SILENCE ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES.

All radio traffic should be kept to UISD PD ONLY and Campus Principal and SSCO only.

UISD PD Officer will activate Radio Silent

Once the situation has been assessed by law enforcement and it has been determined that there no longer a threat upon receiving notice from UISD PD, Admin will announce an ALL CLEAR and Activate a HOLD.

UISD PD Officer will activate Radio Silent

Once the situation has been assessed by law enforcement and it has been determined that there no longer a threat upon receiving notice from UISD PD, Admin will announce an ALL CLEAR and Activate a HOLD.

### ICS:

Will act as a liaison between UISD PD (dispatch and officers onsite) to accommodate the needs on campus.

### Teachers:

Remove magnetic strip.

While closing the door, check for any stragglers, and bring in any students in the immediate area in.

Turn off lights and cover window (on door)

Move students to an area that is safe and take roll. (IF additional students are in your class who are not on your roster add the student's first and last name)

Maintain QUIET in the classroom calming students down who are visibly emotional.

If possible barricade the door with heavy furniture.

Prepare.

As a last resort **AVOID, DENY, and DEFEND.**

**You Tube : ALERRT (Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training)**

### SILENCE ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES.

DO NOT open the door for ANYONE or an ALL CLEAR has been announced by a Campus Administrator.

IF a fire alarm goes off IGNORE. We will not use this method to evacuate the building.

During a HOLD, contact ICS who will coordinate with law enforcement to assist and facilitate with the logistics.

Teachers need to be reassured that UISD PD will clear and evacuate once it has been determined safe.

\*\*\*Should teachers and students be outside the main building (i.e. recess, PE, Marching Pads, etc.) students **should not** come back in to the main building. Either enter the nearest

### Security Officer(s):

High Schools: Security Officers outside in the Guard Shack will secure exterior gate and man station until police arrive.

All other Security Staff should take cover and take any student(s) or visitor(s) and help clear the hall.

## **UISD PD**

UISD PD: Coordinate between assisting agencies to establish perimeter and determine the best way to handle the incident.

UISD PD will assess and clear the building of both a threat and under their direction will evacuate.



## **LOCKDOWN DRILL INTRODUCTION**

A critical aspect in implementing the SRP with fidelity is the Lockdown Drill. Successful drills provide participants with the “Muscle Memory” should an actual Lockdown occur. Drills also reveal deficiencies that may exist in either procedure or personnel.

### **PREPARATION**

Prior to drilling, students, staff and administration should review the SRP Training Presentation (available at <http://iloveguys.org>).

Administration should also verify with law enforcement their use of the SRP in the school or district.

Teachers should take time with students to identify and occupy a “Safe Zone” in the classroom where they cannot be seen through any corridor windows. If visibility in a classroom is problematic, alternative locations should be identified.

Additionally, the following instructions should be delivered to students.

1. Locate yourself at a point in the classroom where you can no longer see out the corridor window.
2. Maintain silence. No cell phone calls.
3. Refrain from texting during drills.

### **PARTNERSHIPS**

School level drills should have district support. There may also be district resources available to assist in conducting the drill. Another key partnership is with local law enforcement. Local patrol, community resource officers or school resource officers should be part of the drill process.

### **THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM**

A common practice is for the school to have a pre-identified Building/School Emergency Response Team. In a growing number of states, these teams are legislatively mandated to be organized using the Incident Command System. Even if not mandated, this structure is effective for responding to any type of incident and is used by other first responders.

It is not uncommon for administration to survey the staff population for prior emergency response, military or law enforcement experience for placement in the team.

### **THE LOCKDOWN DRILL TEAM**

The Lockdown Drill Team is a little different than the Emergency Response Team. During an actual Lockdown, members of the Emergency Response Team may be in classrooms or administrative offices in Lockdown mode and unable to assist with the response.

The ideal Lockdown Drill Team should include the principal, facilities manager, district safety representatives and law enforcement. In larger schools it's important to have enough people on the team to conduct the drill in a timely manner.

### **STAFF NOTIFICATION**

When Lockdown Drills are first being introduced to a school, it is absolutely okay to tell staff in advance of the drill. There may be staff members adversely affected by surprise drills.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS CONSIDERATIONS**

It is critical to inform special needs staff prior to every drill. Some special needs students need advance notification that a drill is going to occur. For some students, any alteration to routine can be problematic.

### **THE PRE-DRILL BRIEFING**

Prior to the Lockdown Drill a short planning meeting with the Lockdown Drill Team should occur. The agenda is simple:

1. Review the floor plan and team member assignments
2. Expected drill duration
3. The door knock and classroom conversation
4. Potential student or staff distress
5. Announcing the Lockdown Drill

When using public address to announce a Lockdown Drill, repeat, “Lockdown. Locks, Lights, Out of Sight. This is a drill.” It's important to tell students and staff that this is a drill. Failure to do so will most likely result in parents, media and maybe even law enforcement coming to the school.

### **CONDUCTING THE DRILL**

The Lockdown Drill Team should be broken into groups of two or three members who go to individual classrooms. One of the members acts as “Scribe” and documents each classroom response. (See Lockdown Response Worksheet.)

At the classroom door, team members listen for noise and look through the corridor window for any student or staff visibility or movement. A team member then knocks on the door and requests entry. There should be no response to this request.

At this point a member of the team unlocks the classroom door and announces their name and position.

### **THE CLASSROOM CONVERSATION**

Typically this conversation addresses the purpose of the drill, and the observed outcome for that classroom. Additionally, self evacuation and other life safety strategies can be discussed. Any issues should be addressed gently but immediately.

### **WINDOWS**

Often there is a conversation about inside and outside windows. Corridor windows are left uncovered so that first responders can see inside the room. Outside windows are left untouched because the threat would be inside the building.

### **THE LOCKDOWN DRILL TEAM DEBRIEF**

At the conclusion of the drill, the team should reconvene for a debrief. Any issues should be documented and actions items should be identified.

# LOCKDOWN DRILL WORKSHEET



School \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Time \_\_\_\_\_

Team Members \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Stopwatch Time \_\_\_\_\_ Student Population \_\_\_\_\_ Staff Count \_\_\_\_\_

Room#							
Locks	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No						
Lights	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No						
Out of Sight	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No						
Door Knock	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No						
Why?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No						
Options	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No						

Notes \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Room#							
Locks	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No						
Lights	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No						
Out of Sight	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No						
Door Knock	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No						
Why?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No						
Options	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No						

Notes \_\_\_\_\_

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# Threats and Hazards

## In this section

- Types of Threats and Hazards
- Natural Disasters
- Adversarial, Incidental, and Human-caused Hazards
- Biological Hazards
- Technological Threats

## Overview

Effective emergency response planning depends on identifying the potential threats and hazards that a school and district faces and the impact that these may have on the students, staff, and community.

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## Types of Threats and Hazards

Threats and hazards can result from natural, technological, biological, or human-caused incidents. One hazard can lead to other risks or threats. For example, a derailed train carrying hazardous materials could result in an explosion, fire, or release of toxic fumes.

- ❑ Natural hazards result from acts of nature, such as hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, wildfires, and wild animals.
- ❑ Adversarial, incidental and human-caused threats or hazards result from the intentional actions of people or from incidents assumed to be accidental in nature but that have unintended consequences.
- ❑ Biological hazards are infectious diseases, such as pandemic influenza, MRSA, or contaminated food outbreaks.
- ❑ Technological hazards result from transportation accidents or the failures of systems and structures, such as hazardous materials spills.

## Types of Threats and Hazards

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Threats and Hazards	Types and Examples	
<b>Natural (weather)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Earthquakes</li> <li>■ Floods</li> <li>■ Severe weather                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Hail storms</li> <li>■ Heat exhaustion and heatstroke</li> <li>■ Hurricanes</li> <li>■ Lightning strikes</li> <li>■ Tornadoes</li> <li>■ Winter storms and wind chill</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Wildfires</li> <li>■ Winds, for example, severe, straight-line</li> </ul>
<b>Adversarial, incidental, or human-caused</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Accidents                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ During out-of-school time, for example, during summer or holiday breaks</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Active shooter</li> <li>■ Angry parents</li> <li>■ Assault, for example, sexual assault or rape</li> <li>■ Bioterror and biohazard threats</li> <li>■ Bomb threat</li> <li>■ Bullying and harassment (includes cyber-bullying)</li> <li>■ Bus accident</li> <li>■ Child abuse and neglect (domestic)</li> <li>■ Civil disturbance, for example, demonstration or student walk-out                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Perceived threat</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Copycat threat</li> <li>■ Criminal threat or action</li> <li>■ Cyber attack</li> <li>■ Fight</li> <li>■ Hostage situation</li> <li>■ Intruder</li> <li>■ Missing or abducted or kidnapped students</li> <li>■ Overdose (alcohol, medication, or substance abuse)</li> <li>■ Strikes, including work stoppages and labor negotiations</li> <li>■ Suicide</li> <li>■ Terrorism</li> <li>■ Threat of violence, including threat assessment</li> </ul>
<b>Biological</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Allergic reaction                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Anaphylaxis</li> <li>■ Food (<i>Food Allergy Assessment Form</i>)</li> <li>■ Insect</li> <li>■ Latex</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Blood-borne diseases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Infectious diseases                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ MRSA (methicillin-resistant <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>)</li> <li>■ Meningitis</li> <li>■ Skin rash</li> <li>■ West Nile Virus</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Influenza (flu) epidemic and pandemic                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Phases of pandemic</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Technological</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Airplane crash</li> <li>■ Building collapse</li> <li>■ Business interruption</li> <li>■ Fire, arson, explosion</li> <li>■ Gas leak and noxious odor</li> <li>■ Hazardous materials                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Inside school, for example, lab spill</li> <li>■ Outside school, for example, vehicle accident or terrorist attack</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Power failure, for example, utility outages, including water</li> <li>■ Train derailment, for example, railcar and tanker truck accident</li> </ul>

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe & Drug-Free Schools



## Earthquakes



### Situation Description

An earthquake is a sudden, rapid shaking of the earth caused by rock breaking and shifting beneath the earth's surface. Earthquakes strike suddenly, without warning, and can occur at any time of the year, day, or night.

The first indication of an earthquake may be a gentle shaking that causes hanging plants and light fixtures to sway or objects to wobble on shelves. You may feel a violent jolt, similar to a sonic boom, or you may hear a low rumbling noise. A second or two later, the shaking may become more violent and people will find it very difficult to move from one place to another.

Act at the first indication of ground shaking.

### Threats

During an earthquake, the greatest immediate hazard to people in or near a building is the danger of being struck by falling objects. When the ground is shaking, the school population is safest finding immediate shelter under tables, counters, or desks.

Doorways are no stronger than any other part of a structure; do not rely on them for protection.

Free-standing cabinets and bookshelves are likely to topple. Objects that are mounted on walls may shake loose and fly across the room. Ceiling components may pop out and bring fixtures, ductwork, sprinkler heads, and other items down with them. Door frames may be bent, jamming doors shut. Rocking walls can bend window frames, causing glass to shatter and sending dangerous shards into the room.

The noise accompanying an earthquake can cause considerable emotional stress. Prepare children to anticipate the noisy clamor of moving and falling objects, shattering glass, wailing fire alarms, banging doors, and creaking walls.

Aftershocks differentiate earthquakes from other natural disasters. Since no clearly defined endpoint exists, the disruptions that continued tremors cause may increase psychological distress.

## Action Steps

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### If indoors:

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- ❑ Move away from windows, shelves, heavy objects, and furniture that may fall. Take cover under a desk, table, or bench. Stay away from windows, computers, televisions, stacks or shelves of books, file cabinets, and other heavy objects.
- ❑ Drop to your knees. Clasp one hand firmly behind the head, covering your neck. Wrap your other arm around a table or chair leg and bury your face in your arms, protecting your head.
- ❑ If no cover is available, get against an inside doorway or crouch against an inside wall and cover your head. Stay away from outside walls, windows, or other expanses of glass.
- ❑ In the Library, immediately move away from bookshelves.
- ❑ In Science Labs extinguish all burners if possible before taking cover. Stay clear of hazardous chemicals that may spill.
- ❑ Based on the layout of your campus, specifically gymnasium, auditorium, and cafeteria, determine the best procedures for what to do in areas. Get against an inside doorway or crouch against an inside wall and cover your head. Stay away from

outside walls, windows, or other expanses of glass.

- ❑ Leave all doors open to minimize jamming if the building shifts.
- ❑ Do not try to run through the building or outside because falling objects are found near outside doors and walls.

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### If outdoors:

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- ❑ Account for students and quickly move to an open space away from the building and overhead electrical wires.
- ❑ Lie flat, face down, and wait for shocks to subside.
- ❑ On a school bus, stop the bus away from power lines, bridges, overpasses, and buildings. Students should remain in their seats, crouch down, and hold on.

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### After the quake:

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- ❑ Evacuate all students and staff in an orderly manner using pre-planned evacuation routes taking United ISD Emergency Go-Kit.
- ❑ Until First Responders arrive CERT will assist in accounting for students and staff and assist all injured students to triage.
- ❑ Nurse and staff will set up a triage station to handle the care of injured students and staff.

- ❑ Give first aid to injured students and staff.
- ❑ Account for all students. Find missing students and staff with search and rescue teams.
- ❑ Keep students outdoors in the evacuation area until buildings are declared safe.
- ❑ CERT Team-Check damage to utility systems and appliances. Shut off the main power, gas, and water valves if necessary.
- ❑ Seal off and indicate areas where hazardous materials have spilled. Contact Energy and Environmental Department (956) 473-7930.
- ❑ Administration- Establish communication with school district officials.



## Floods



### Situation Description

A flood may occur as a result of an abnormal, progressive rise in the water level of a creek/river or sudden downpour, subsequently inundating areas, which are not normally submerged.

Very small streams, gullies, creeks, culverts, dry streambeds, or low-lying ground that may appear harmless in dry weather can flood.

### Action Steps

<b>Flood or Flash Flood Watch:</b>	Conditions are favorable for flooding. Inform staff, but no other action is required.
<b>Flood or Flash Flood Warning:</b>	Conditions are occurring or impending, threatening to close roads, wash out bridges, and inundate property. Move to shelter on higher ground.

#### Before the flood:

- Always have a stock of emergency supplies available. Keep a portable, battery-operated radio and flashlights in working order.
- Learn your community's flood evacuation route and the location of high ground.

### Threats

Floods are one of the most common and widespread of all natural disasters. Some floods develop over a period of days. Flash floods are the most dangerous because they occur without warning, move at intense speeds, and can tear out trees, destroy roads and bridges, and wreck buildings. Rushing floodwaters can carry a deadly cargo of rocks, mud, smashed trees, and other debris.

Floodwaters that are only 1 foot deep can sweep people off their feet.

#### Before/After School during or after heavy rains

DETR in collaboration with the Office of Superintendent will:

- Monitor the weather when sustained rain or a cloud burst raise the threat of flooding, all staff is encouraged to monitor broadcasts for updated weather information and instruction.
- Upon receiving official notice of a flood warning the Office of the Superintendent shall activate Severe Weather Protocol.

- ❑ Via Communications Department will notify any affected schools or campus facilities that may be susceptible to flooding.
- ❑ Shall make a decision to open or close schools no later than 6 AM on the day in question and communicated as soon as possible to parents, guardians, and staff via use of School Messenger, Media Outlets, District Website, and United ISD Social Media Sites.
- ❑ When permissible will request school administration visit their campus to ensure no students have been dropped off in the event a parent does not receive information of the cancellation of classes.

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#### **During or after heavy rains:**

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- ❑ DERT will notify any affected schools or campus facilities that may be susceptible to flooding.
- ❑ Turn off all utilities. Disconnect electrical appliances, but don't touch any electrical equipment if the floor is wet or under water.

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#### **In flash floods:**

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- ❑ Take immediate action to ensure that students and staff are safe.

Evacuate students and staff to a designated area of high ground.

- ❑ Stay out of floodwaters, drainage ditches, or channels.
- ❑ **School bus drivers:**  
If the depth of water on a roadway comes into question or water appears to be flowing across the road, do not enter it or proceed. The road may be compromised. Water can stall the bus and place occupants in harm's way. Do not enter underpasses that are filling with water and do not try to cross a bridge that has water flooding over or around it. Determine an alternate route to travel or have a contingency plan to return to the school once you encounter floodwaters.

- ❑ **School bus drivers:** If the school bus is caught in an unavoidable situation, seek higher ground immediately. If the bus stalls and water is rising, abandon the bus and seek higher ground before the situation worsens.

- ❑ **School bus drivers/Staff in district vehicles:** Contact police. If permissible notify your immediate supervisor of your location and status.

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#### **After a flood:**

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- ❑ Monitor broadcasts for updated information and instructions.

## Severe Weather Outlook System



Upon receiving official reports of severe weather, District Administration shall make the appropriate determination of action to ensure campus staff is prepared for severe weather and protect students and staff during times of dangerous weather.

### Severe Weather: Hailstorm

#### Situation Description

Hail is precipitation in the form of balls or clumps of ice in varying sizes. Hail forms in strong thunderstorms, particularly those with intense updrafts.

Hailstones, while most commonly under an inch in diameter, can sometimes grow to 6 inches and weigh more than a pound. Pea- or golf-ball-sized hailstones are common in severe storms.

#### Threats

The greatest danger with hail is the high velocities with which it travels and can impact a surface (speeds greater than 100 mph). Large hailstones have been known to cause concussions or fatal head trauma.

Large hail is often a sign of a powerful and potentially dangerous storm. Hail falls from the same area of a thunderstorm where the tornado

is found, but large hail does not always imply a tornado.

#### Action Steps

- ❑ Immediately move inside, or go to a safe location, such as a vehicle, secure awning, or facility with a roof structure.
- ❑ Stay away from windows and glass doors. Hailstones driven by a storm's winds may shatter a building's windows and glass doors.
- ❑ If caught outside with no shelter in sight, try to find cover in a low elevation area such as a ravine or ditch. Drop to your knees, using your arms to shield your head.
- ❑ DO NOT lie flat on the ground.
- ❑ **School bus drivers:** Pull safely onto the shoulder of the road. If at all possible, pull into a sturdy garage or parking structure, or under a shelter to

minimize damage. Keep students inside the bus and turn on emergency flashers until the storm subsides. Contact dispatch and notify them of your location, passengers, and status.

- ❑ Should your campus be damaged during a hailstorm contact Maintenance and Operations at (956) 463- 7960.



## Severe Weather: Hurricanes



### Situation Description

*Hurricanes* can produce extremely high winds (greater than 74 miles per hour) and torrential rain (leading to flash floods).

### Threats

Hurricanes are severe tropical storms with heavy rains and intense winds which blow in a counterclockwise circle of several hundred miles around a center “eye.” If the eye, or storm center, passes directly overhead, a lull in the storm occurs lasting from a few minutes to half an hour. At the other side of the eye, the wind will return rapidly to hurricane force and blow from the opposite direction.

Secondary hurricane events include rainfall flooding, high winds, power outages, tornadoes and microbursts, hazardous material spills, wind-borne debris, fallen trees, downed power lines, and building damage.

### Action Steps

#### When a hurricane is imminent:

The Office of the Superintendent

- ❑ Meet with district and building leaders to determine if school closures are imminent and further discuss the options of evacuation and facilitation.
- ❑ Via Communications Department, communicate to families and staff and frequently update them about school facility clean up and restoration, status of re-opening if schools were closed and other pertinent information.

#### When a hurricane warning is issued:

- ❑ Upon receiving notice of a school closure, campus administration will coordinate the release of students.

#### Use of District Facilities as Emergency Shelters

The Office of the Superintendent

- ❑ Upon receiving an Emergency Declaration from the State of Texas Governor’s Office district

administration shall coordinate with district staff and campus

administration on school closures and reopening status.

## Severe Weather: Lightning Strikes



### Situation Description

A lightning strike — a flash of light — is an electric discharge in the atmosphere, from within a cloud, cloud-to-cloud, cloud-to-air, or cloud-to-ground.

### Threats

All thunderstorms produce lightning. In general, lightning will travel the easiest route from the cloud to ground, which means it often strikes the highest object.

When lightning strikes, the current will travel through the object, along the ground, along wire, metal, and water.

On average, after floods, lightning is the second deadliest type of storm. Studies have shown that most victims of lightning strikes are struck before and after the storm has peaked. This is because lightning can strike as far as 10 miles from the area where it is raining.

Lightning is the first thunderstorm hazard to arrive and the last to leave.

**General rule:** If you see or hear thunder, take action immediately. Activity may resume when it appears as though the storms have passed and lightning has not been

seen or thunder heard for at least 30 minutes.

### Action Steps

- ❑ DO NOT wait for the rain to start before seeking shelter, and do not leave the shelter because the rain has stopped.
- ❑ If no facility is close enough to athletic fields or playgrounds, move students inside the school, a permanent structure, or buses.
- ❑ At events with large crowds, allow more time to evacuate all people to safe areas.
- ❑ Once inside, stay away from electrical appliances or outlets, radiators, plumbing fixtures, and windows.
- ❑ If inside a school bus, roll windows up and avoid contact with any conducting paths leading to the outside of the vehicle (for example, radios or ignition).
- ❑ Avoid open doors, the highest object in the area, hilltops, open spaces, wire fences, exposed sheds, or trees (stay twice as far away as the tree is tall). Stay out of bodies of water, small boats, and indoor and outdoor pools. Do not use landline phones or electrical equipment.

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**Alternative options: How to survive a lightning strike (if you're caught outdoors):**

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- ❑ If your hair begins to stand on end or your skin starts to tingle, that means a lightning strike is imminent. Immediately get into a crouching position. *Note:* Lightning may strike without this warning.
- ❑ Crouch down low like a baseball catcher. Get as low as possible. The nearer you are to the ground, the less likely you are to be struck by lightning. But NEVER lie down.
- ❑ Place your hands over your ears to minimize hearing loss from the loud clap of thunder that will boom very close to you.
- ❑ In the crouch position, have the balls of the feet be the only part of your body that touches the ground. Lightning can strike the ground first before entering the body. The more you minimize

your contact with the ground, the less chance of electricity entering your body.

- ❑ Touch the heels of your feet together. If electricity from a ground strike enters through your feet, this position increases the likelihood that the electricity will go in one foot and out the other, rather than into your body.

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**If struck by lightning:**

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- ❑ Lightning-strike victims carry no electrical charge and should be attended to immediately.
- ❑ Lightning-strike victims who show signs of cardiac or respiratory arrest need emergency assistance immediately. After calling for emergency help, administer CPR with aggressive continuous chest compressions.

## Severe Weather: Heat Advisories



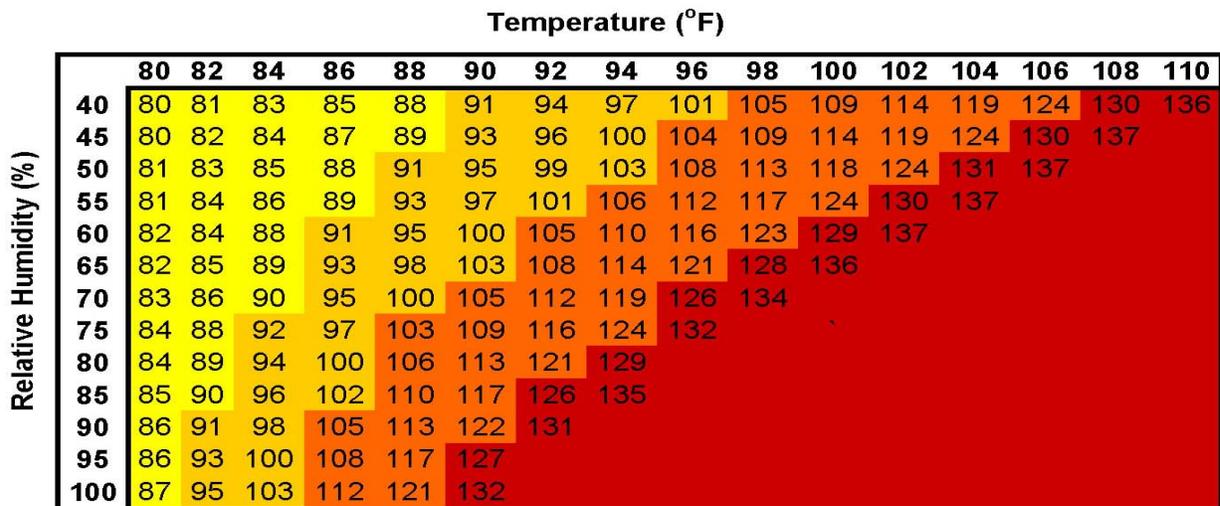
### Situation Description

Excessive heat is a prolonged period of temperatures generally 10° or more above the average, and is often combined with humidity.

Excessive heat is one of the leading causes of death of all other weather events. The NWS issues advisories for high heat to warn of the dangers.

<b>Excessive Heat Watch:</b>	Conditions are favorable for an excessive heat event to meet or exceed local Excessive Heat Warning criteria in the next 24 to 72 hours
<b>Excessive Heat Warning:</b>	Heat Index values are forecasting to meet or exceed locally defined warning criteria for at least 2 days  daytime highs = 105°-110° F
<b>Heat Advisory:</b>	Heat Index values are forecasting to meet locally defined advisory criteria for 1 to 2 days  daytime highs = 100°-105° F

### Heat Index



Likelihood of Heat Disorders with Prolonged Exposure or Strenuous Activity

Caution
  Extreme Caution
  Danger
  Extreme Danger

**How to read the chart:**

To determine the heat index, know the air temperature and the relative humidity. For example, a temperature of 96° and relative humidity of 50% will “feel” like 108°.

Heat index values were devised for shade and light wind conditions. Exposure to full sunshine can increase values by up to 15° F.

Classification	Heat Index	Effect on the Body
<b>Caution</b>	80° F – 90° F	Fatigue possible with prolonged exposure or physical activity
<b>Extreme Caution</b>	90° F – 103° F	Heat stroke, heat cramps, or heat exhaustion possible with prolonged exposure or physical activity
<b>Danger</b>	103° F – 124° F	Heat cramps or heat exhaustion likely, and heat stroke possible with prolonged exposure or physical activity
<b>Extreme Danger</b>	125° F – higher	Heat stroke highly likely

## Severe Weather: Heat Exhaustion & Heatstroke

### Situation Descriptions

Heat emergencies are health crises caused by exposure to hot weather and sun. The combination of hot weather and high humidity can cause heat-related illnesses. The stages of heat emergencies are heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke.

<b>Heat Exhaustion:</b>	The body's response to an excessive loss of water and salt in sweat.
<b>Heatstroke:</b>	A form of <i>hyperthermia</i> (abnormally elevated body temperature) with accompanying physical and neurological symptoms. A true medical emergency that can be fatal if not properly and promptly treated.

### Threats

All three stages of heat emergencies are serious and, if left untreated, the first two stages can lead to heatstroke, the most serious of the three. Victims of heatstroke must receive immediate treatment to avoid permanent organ damage.

### Action Steps

- ❑ Children are especially vulnerable to heat emergencies. If they are playing in the heat, they might be having so much fun they don't recognize the warning signs. In hot weather, frequently check on children, and make sure they drink plenty of water or sports drinks.
- ❑ The most important measures to prevent heat exhaustion and heatstroke are to avoid becoming dehydrated and reduce vigorous physical activities in hot and humid weather.



## Severe Weather: Tornadoes



### Situation Description

Spawned from powerful thunderstorms, tornadoes appear as a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud that extends to the ground with winds that may exceed 200 miles per hour.

<b>Tornado Watch:</b>	Conditions are favorable for a tornado to form, or tornadoes are expected to develop.  Remain alert for approaching storms.
<b>Tornado Warning:</b>	A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar.  Take shelter immediately.

Damage from severe winds – those with a speed in the range of 70 to 80 mph – is more common than tornadoes. The type and extent of damage can include downed trees and moderate structural impacts (for example, roof failure, breaking glass, flying debris).

The most dangerous locations are generally large rooms with big expansive roofs. The collapse of the room’s load-bearing walls may lead to the failure of the entire roof. Roofs tend to rely on gravity to keep them attached.

Rooms with large windows may shatter from being struck by flying debris (airborne missiles) or from pressure stresses. While windows on the side of the school facing the storm are most susceptible, any wind has the potential to shatter glass.

### Threats

Tornadoes are nature’s most violent storms. Damage paths can be more than 1 mile wide and 50 miles long.

Some tornadoes are clearly visible, while rain or low-hanging clouds obscure others. Occasionally, tornadoes develop so rapidly that little, if any, advance warning is possible.

Don’t try to flee from a tornado in a school bus or other vehicle; vehicles are no match for these swift, erratic storms.

### Wind Threats

### Role of Administration:

- ❑ Campus Administration will activate Emergency Procedure-SHELTER
- ❑ Account for students, staff and notify the Office of the Superintendent of any injuries or damages.

- ❑ Establish a means to disseminate information to parents and media.
- ❑ Activate Emergency Dismissal Procedures
- ❑ Manage and monitor CERT Team

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### **Role of Custodian:**

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- ❑ Shut off the main gas supply valve.
- ❑ After a tornado report any and all damages done to the facility to Maintenance and Operation (956) 473-7960

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### **CERT Team**

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- ❑ Check students and staff for injuries. Don't try to move seriously injured people unless they are in immediate danger of further injury. Call for help right away.
- ❑ Coordinate and facilitate with the Emergency Dismissal Procedures.
- ❑ Keep an accurate record of the hospitals to which any were sent.
- ❑ Maintain a complete list of all injured students and staff.

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### **If severe weather is imminent:**

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- ❑ Students from playgrounds or other outdoor areas will immediately enter the building.
- ❑ Students in portable classrooms will report to the main building.
- ❑ Keep students in school after regular hours if threatening weather is approaching, and inform parents of this practice. Children are safer deep within a school than in a bus or car. Do not send students home early if severe weather is approaching.
- ❑ Postpone lunches, assemblies in large rooms, and outdoor recess until the storm has passed. Also postpone after-school sports events and practices.

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### **If a tornado warning is issued:**

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- ❑ Act quickly, stay calm, and move to pre-designated safe areas. Evacuate classrooms quickly and orderly. Do not stop for coats, books, personal items, or restroom use. Stay away from windows and open spaces. Duck, cover, and hold.
- ❑ Assume protective squatting position with either the buttocks to the wall or facing the wall. Instruct students to "duck and cover" with hands locked on back of neck. Remain in position until instructed differently.

- ❑ Remain in severe weather or tornado shelter location until the “all clear” announcement.
- ❑ If students are on a school bus, evacuate the bus and move them to a substantial structure immediately, if one is available. If a school bus is caught in the open when a tornado is approaching, have students get out and lie flat in the nearest ditch, ravine, or culvert. Have them use their hands to shield their heads. Keep students far enough away from the bus so it cannot topple on them.

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**After a tornado strikes:**

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- ❑ Keep students assembled in an orderly manner and in a safe area away from broken glass and other sharp debris. Stay away from power lines, pools of water containing power lines, and emergency traffic areas.
- ❑ Do not allow anyone to enter a damaged or unstable building. Secure the building as needed to keep people away from the structure and wreckage until professionals can assess the structure and clear away debris.
- ❑ Beware of downed power lines and broken gas pipes.
- ❑ Take roll and search for any missing students and staff.
- ❑ Maintain and update attendance count.



## Severe Weather: Winter Storms



### Situation Description

Winter storms can range from moderate snow over several hours to icy roadways and conditions that may affect transportation and

campuses district-wide. Many winter storms are accompanied by dangerously low temperatures and, at times, by strong winds, icing, sleet, and freezing rain.

<b>Hazardous Weather Outlook:</b>	Issued daily by the NWS, it addresses potentially hazardous weather that may occur in the next 7 days, and includes information about potential severe thunderstorms, heavy rain or flooding, winter weather, extremes of heat or cold, etc. NWS issues other outlooks on an event-driven basis, such as the Flood Potential Outlook and Severe Weather Outlook.
<b>Winter Weather Advisory:</b>	Expect conditions to cause significant inconveniences; they may be hazardous if caution is not exercised.
<b>Winter Storm Watch:</b>	Winter storm conditions — snow, sleet, or ice accumulation from freezing rain — are possible within 36 to 48 hours. Hazardous weather is possible, but not imminent.
<b>Winter Storm Warning:</b>	Life-threatening, severe winter conditions — have begun or will begin within 24 hours. Weather conditions pose a threat to life or property. People in the path of the storm need to take protective action.
<b>Blizzard Watch:</b>	Hazardous winter weather due to a combination of snow and wind are possible within the next 24 to 72 hours.

### Threats

Sleet, freezing rain, snow increase the risk of driving and experiencing an accident. Freezing rain can make travel nearly impossible. In addition, heavy accumulations of ice can bring down trees and utility lines, creating more hazards.

- ❑ For most winter storms, the primary decision will be whether to cancel, delay, or hold classes as usual, which will be decided by the Office of the Superintendent.

### Action Steps

## Severe Weather: Wind Chill



### Situation Description

Wind chill is determined by the rate of heat loss on the body resulting from the combined effect of low temperature and wind.

<b>Wind Chill Advisory:</b>	Issued when the wind chill temperature is expected to fall between $-5^{\circ}\text{F}$ and $-20^{\circ}\text{F}$ .
<b>Wind Chill Warning:</b>	Issued when the wind chill temperature is expected to fall to or below $-20^{\circ}\text{F}$ (for 3 hours).

Wind chill is the human perception of temperature created by the combination of the actual temperature and the additional heat loss from exposed skin caused by the wind. This is how cold it “feels” outside (the apparent temperature).

The higher the wind speed and the lower the temperature, the greater the wind chill effect.

If the actual air temperature is  $40^{\circ}\text{F}$  and the wind speed is 10 mph, the apparent temperature is  $34^{\circ}\text{F}$ . At  $30^{\circ}\text{F}$  with a 10-mph wind speed, the apparent temperature is  $21^{\circ}\text{F}$ .

To calculate the wind chill manually, go to

[www.weather.gov/grb/windchill](http://www.weather.gov/grb/windchill)  
(See also the NWS Wind Chill Chart later in this section.)

### Threats

When the body is unable to warm, serious cold-related illnesses and injuries may occur and permanent tissue damage and death may result.

In cases of severe wind chill exposure, heat is carried away from the body at a faster rate than normal, driving down both the skin temperature and eventually the internal body temperature.

Cold-related illnesses can slowly overcome someone who has been chilled by low temperatures, brisk winds, or wet clothing.

### Action Steps: General

- Consider limiting outdoor activities to no more than 15 minutes during wind chill advisories. Students should be properly clothed (coats, gloves and hats) to play outdoors.
- Refrain from any outdoor activities when wind chill warnings are issued.
- Key severe winter weather factors that are considered include:

- Current and projected weather conditions
  - Road conditions due to blowing snow and poor visibility
  - Temperature and wind chill factors
  - The ability to get buses running on time
  - Be prepared for the possibility of being isolated at school.
  - Always keep a battery-powered radio and flashlights in working order. Be sure to stock extra batteries.
  - Store food that can be prepared without an electric or gas stove.
  - Remind staff to keep their cars “winterized” with antifreeze and to carry a winter car kit that includes a windshield scraper, flashlight, tow chain or rope, shovel, tire chains, blanket, bag of sand or salt, a colorful distress flag, and an emergency flare. Keep extra gloves, hats, and outerwear in the car.
- ❑ Listen to the radio for weather conditions and school reports.
  - ❑ Dress for the season.
    - Many layers of thin clothing are warmer than single layers of thick clothing.
    - Mittens are warmer than gloves.
  - Wear a hat. Most body heat is lost through the top of the head.
- ❑ Cover your mouth with scarves to protect your lungs from directly inhaling extremely cold air.

### **Action Steps: Frost Bite**

**What happens to the body:** Freezing in deep layers of skin and tissue; pale, waxy-white skin color; skin becomes hard and numb; usually affects the fingers, hands, toes, feet, ears, and nose.

- ❑ Move the person to a warm, dry area. Don't leave the person alone. Remove any wet or tight clothing that may cut off blood flow to the affected area.
- ❑ DO NOT rub the affected area; rubbing causes damage to the skin and tissue.
- ❑ Gently place the affected area in a warm (105° F) water bath and monitor the water temperature to slowly warm the tissue. Don't pour warm water directly on the affected area because it will warm the tissue too fast, causing tissue damage. (Warming takes about 25 to 40 minutes).
- ❑ After the affected area has been warmed, it may become puffy and blister. The affected area may have a burning feeling or numbness. When normal feeling, movement, and skin color have

returned, dry the affected area and wrap it to keep it warm.

- ❑ Seek medical attention as soon as possible.

### **Action Steps: Hypothermia**

**What happens to the body:** Normal body temperature (98.6° F) drops to or below 95° F; fatigue or drowsiness; uncontrolled shivering; cool bluish skin; slurred speech; clumsy movements; irritable, irrational or confused behavior.

- ❑ Seek medical attention as soon as possible.
- ❑ Move the person to a warm, dry area. Don't leave the person alone. Remove any wet clothing and replace with warm, dry clothing or wrap the person in blankets.
- ❑ If alert, have the person drink warm, sweet drinks (sugar water or sports-type drinks). Avoid drinks with caffeine (coffee, tea, or hot chocolate) or alcohol.
- ❑ Have the person move arms and legs to create muscle heat. If the person is unable to do this, place warm bottles or hot packs in the armpits, groin, neck and head areas. DO NOT rub the person's body or place them in warm water bath. This may stop the person's heart.

### **Transportation Plan in Severe Weather**

- ❑ The school district's transportation department (or contracted service) should be aware of weather conditions. When snow is anticipated, check district highways beginning at 3 A.M.
- ❑ Periodically contact transportation directors in nearby districts to determine their conditions and plans.
- ❑ Consult NWS and local weather forecasts, local and state police, highway personnel, and any other sources that will ensure having an appropriate transportation plan for the weather conditions.
- ❑ Notify the superintendent or designee by 5 A.M. or earlier with a recommendation to cancel schools or delay schools (1 to 2 hours).
- ❑ As early as possible, notify local media, parents, staff through various communication channels.

**If school buses cannot bring children home due to the weather**

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- If the principal determines that some students could safely walk home given the relatively close proximity of their homes, and if they normally walk to and from school, release them. Advise the students to stay together in a group as they walk and to observe safety rules.

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**For secondary school students:**

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- If some students don't have transportation, direct them to report to a central location.
- If some students choose to walk home, advise them to stay in a group and observe safety rules.

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**For any grade level:**

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- The principal and assigned staff will remain at school until all students are safely released.



## Wildfires



### Situation Description

A wildfire is a rapidly spreading and uncontrolled fire that can occur anywhere, from remote wilderness areas to backyards.

Wildfires can start from natural causes, such as lightning, or human carelessness (for example, cigarettes, unattended campfires), outdoor burning, and arson.

### Threats

Wildfires are particularly prevalent in spring, summer, and fall, especially during dry periods and high winds, when fallen branches, leaves, grasses, and scrub can dry out and become highly flammable. Heat waves, droughts, and cyclical climate changes such as El Niño can also dramatically increase the risk of wildfires.

Wildfires can move at tremendous speeds, up to 40 miles in a single day, consuming up to 1,000 acres per hour. Dense clouds of burning embers push relentlessly ahead of the flames, crossing firebreaks without pause.

The updraft caused by a large wildfire draws air from surrounding areas; these self-generated winds can

lead to a phenomenon known as a *firestorm*.

### Role of Administration:

- Campus Administration will activate Emergency Procedure-EVACUATE
- Activate CERT Team
- Account for students, staff and notify the Office of the Superintendent of any injuries or damages.
- Establish a means to disseminate information to parents and media.
- Activate Emergency Dismissal Procedures
- Manage and monitor CERT Team

### Role of Custodian:

- Shut off the natural gas supply valve, propane or fuel oil supplies.
- If permissible leave all campus lights ON
- Report all damages done to the facility to Maintenance and Operation (956) 473-7960 who

will check the school's roof and its overhangs immediately. Make sure no fires, sparks, or embers remain.

- Check for broken windows and other possible ways fire may have entered the building.
- 

classroom lights ON This will help to make the school more visible in heavy smoke.

- Close all windows and doors, but leave them unlocked. It may be necessary for firefighters to gain entry into the school to fight the fire. Law enforcement will isolate and patrol the entire area.

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### **CERT Team**

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- Assist special attention to those with medical or physical limitations.
- Coordinate and facilitate with the Emergency Dismissal Procedures.
- Keep an accurate record of the hospitals to which any were sent.
- Maintain a complete list of all injured students and staff.
- Check students and staff for injuries. Don't try to move seriously injured people unless they are in immediate danger of further injury. Call for help right away

### **Action Steps**

- If a wildfire threatens the school, immediately evacuate the building.
- As staff is evacuating the building: TEACHERS: Leave

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### **If trapped in the school:**

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- Stay calm.
- As the fire front approaches, go inside. The fire will pass before the school burns down, or possibly even catches fire.

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### **If caught in a school bus or other vehicle:**

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- Bus Drivers: If unable to change route and are forced to stop, park away from the heaviest trees and brush. Keep the headlights on and ignition off. Evacuate, and escape fire.
- Contact Police/Fire.
- If possible contact Dispatch.



## Adversarial, Incidental, and Human-caused Threats or Hazards

Human-caused threats or hazards result from the:

- ❑ Intentional actions of a person or people, such as a cyber incident, bomb threat, terrorism, active shooter, and civil disturbance; and
- ❑ Incidents assumed to be accidental in nature with unintended consequences.

When dealing with intentional human-caused hazards, the unpredictability of human beings must be considered. People with a desire to carry out a criminal act often seek out targets of opportunity that may not fall into established lists of critical areas or facilities.

These random acts by a person who, for a variety of reasons ranging from fear to emotional trauma to mental instability, may choose to harm others and destroy property.

## Automatic External Defibrillators in Schools

An AED is a portable electronic device used to induce electrical stimulation to the heart muscle if a potential cardiac arrest occurs.

Early access defibrillation has been recognized as a significant factor in survival from incidents of sudden cardiac arrest. Adequate preparation for responding to life-threatening emergency can save lives.

### Why do we have AEDs in schools?

- **Although rare, sudden death in teenagers does occur.** Schools should be prepared to respond with proven treatment and care if a student or employee suddenly collapses at school. Even with the best Emergency Management Service response, it may take 5 to 10 minutes for an ambulance to reach your school. The chance of surviving a sudden cardiac arrest after 10 minutes with no treatment is less than 5%.
- **Schools are community-gathering places.** Many community members attend events at or in local schools and facilities. Usually those attending are at a higher risk of sudden cardiac arrest. Additionally, schools are often identified as sites for mass care and shelter during a disaster.
- **We have an opportunity to teach a future generation how to save a life.** Placing AEDs in schools will train a new generation of a community's population, which will increase awareness and provide a potentially lifesaving resource for our students, staff, and residents.

*Source:* Emergency Medical Services for Children, St. Paul, MN



## Accidents



### Situation Description

Accidents can occur at anytime and vary in injuries. These accidents can take place during or after school, at extracurricular events on athletic fields, classrooms, or at sites across the district.

### Threats

At the scene of an accident, the first thought of responders should always be safety, for the victim, the responder, and any other students in the area.

Look for any potential hazards that put those in the immediate area at further risk. Take steps to ensure the safety and well-being of the injured and bystanders are addressed before beginning first aid.

### Action Steps: **Accidents at School**

- ❑ Assess the injured person for any visible injuries (for example, bleeding, fractures, etc.), as well as signs of consciousness, breathing, pulse, and shock. This quick assessment should guide the next steps for appropriate triage.
- ❑ Keep the person lying down and do not move unless the location and circumstances further endanger the person.
- ❑ If you observe severe bleeding, apply direct pressure with a clean, sterile cloth (if possible), or any piece of clothing.
- ❑ If the injured person is not breathing, check the airway and clear it if necessary.
- ❑ Call 9-1-1 and begin CPR or, if available, attach an automated external defibrillator (AED) unit and follow audio/text instructions.
- ❑ Stay with the injured person until EMS arrives. Send a school representative to the hospital if a parent/guardian is not present.
- ❑ If injuries are minor and the person can be moved without further harm, consider taking the person to the Nurse's Office for assessment and if needed treatment.
- ❑ Call emergency card contacts appropriate for the nature of the accident or injury.
- ❑ Have the responder and witnesses document the incident

(for example, fill out an accident form.



## Bus Accident



### Situation Description

An accident involving a school bus transporting students to and from school, a field trip, an extracurricular activity, or an athletic event.

If a bus accident occurs, use this protocol as a guide to facilitate treating students, disseminating information, and assigning personnel related to the event.

### Threats

The highest appropriately trained on-scene EMS personnel is responsible for determining injuries and potential injuries for anyone involved in the accident.

### Role of Bus Driver/Monitor:

- Remain calm, reassure passengers, and account for all students through the bus roster.
- Major accidents-Call 911, notify dispatch.  
Minor accident- Call dispatch, notify Police.
- Report accident. Communicate the accident to the Transportation Office, providing exact location and information about severity, injuries, and hazards.
- Be alert to the potential for fire or other hazards.
- If it is unsafe to stay on the bus, evacuate students. It is extremely important to not move injured people unless a hazard exists that presents an imminent danger of further injury.
- Administer first aid, if possible, until medical personnel arrive.
- Protect the scene after determining students are not seriously injured. Consider placing reflectors far enough back to protect the bus from another collision. Activate r-way flashers.
- Administer first aid, if possible, until rescue personnel arrive.
- Protect the scene after determining students are not seriously injured. Consider placing reflectors far enough back to protect the bus from another collision. Activate r-way flashers.
- ALL students MUST be evaluated by medical personnel when involved in an accident where the passenger was in a district vehicle.

- ❑ Unless authorized do NOT release students to parents on scene.

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### **Role of Dispatcher:**

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- ❑ Call Police or 911, if driver is unable.
- ❑ Contact Supervisors
- ❑ Transportation Office MUST report the accident to the school principal and the Office of the Superintendent.
- ❑ Provide assistance in gathering and communicating information to emergency personnel, administration, parents, and school officials.

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### **Role of Transportation Supervisor:**

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- ❑ Maintain communication with the Office of the Superintendent, providing updates.

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### **Role of Administration:**

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- ❑ Notify parents, spouse, or person named on the emergency card.
- ❑ Maintain communication with the Office of the Superintendent, providing updates.
- ❑ Activate CERT and initiate responsive procedures, including

preparing for on or off-site counseling.

- ❑ Dispatch the Director of Transportation or an administrator with oversight responsibilities to the accident scene. Consider dispatching to the scene school staff who are most recognized or known by students. Students injured or traumatized by the incident are likely to be more at ease with a familiar adult.
- ❑ If the accident results in injuries to students or staff, dispatch the school principal to the scene of the accident to work with the responding public safety agency's onsite incident commander.
- ❑ Follow up at medical care facility where injured students and other personnel are transported to help identify students and parents and to provide emotional support.
- ❑ As soon as information becomes available, start communicating to parents. Consider establishing a meeting room at the school for parents to gather for incident updates, counseling, reunification, etc.
- ❑ Brief all staff and prepare for the next day's activities.



## Accident



### Situation Description

An incident involving students or staff who may be injured or killed during summer, holiday, and other out-of-school time breaks.

A sudden, generally unanticipated event that profoundly and negatively affects a significant segment of the school population and often involves serious injury or death.

The following procedures should be implemented if a school-wide crisis occurs.

The timing of the notification of a crisis might alter the order of the initial steps taken. For example, if the school is notified in the morning all procedures should be implemented all day with emergency faculty meetings being scheduled during lunch or after school that day.

If notification is received at night or the weekend ask the person providing the information not to spread the information further until the information is verified.

Do not unnecessarily alarm others.

### Threats

For most schools, emergency response planning and response is focused on normal school hours. However, schools today are often occupied for before- and after-school programs, weekend activities, and during breaks in the school year calendar.

While school response may be limited during these times, it is important to have a plan to communicate to the school community any incident that will have an impact on the student body and employees.

### Action Steps

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#### Role of DERT

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- Verify and assess incident reported.
- Determine appropriate plan of action and disseminate to all parties involved.

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**Role of Administration:**

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- ❑ Contact the Office of the Superintendent and report information.
  - ❑ Verify the information and obtain an accurate description of who, what, how many, and where the incident occurred. And have any announcement of the event come from the school administrator. If there is concern regarding the likelihood of compliance it may be useful to keep the reporting person in the office of have that person come into the office if he/she called the information until appropriate steps can be taken.
  - ❑ Tell office staff NOT to repeat or give out any information within or outside school until specifically instructed to do so. Have them direct all inquiries to the administrator or designee until told otherwise. In schools using student office help, it may be useful to request only school staff answers the phones for the remainder of the day.
  - ❑ In case of a report of an off campus death of a student contact the Office of the Superintendent so that death can be verified with Law Enforcement Officials.
  - ❑ DO NOT DISTURB THE AFFECTED STUDENTS FAMILY.
- ❑ If an incident occurs that is likely to have an impact on the school community, such as a death or serious injury, activate CERT to develop a plan, including:
    - Contacting students and staff with information related to the incident
    - Using the school as a place for support services and grief counseling in the immediate aftermath
    - Reaching out to the family of the victims
    - Communicating to students, staff and community
    - Coordinating with community agencies, depending on the incident and how widespread of an impact it has on residents
  - ❑ If additional resources are needed contact the Guidance and Counseling Department at (956) 473-5254

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**Role of District Staff:**

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- ❑ Immediately contact supervisor.
- ❑ DO NOT DISTURB THE AFFECTED STUDENTS FAMILY.

### Action Steps

- When school resumes after the holiday or vacation, additional plans should be in place to notify those students and staff who were not contacted before. Have support services available once this information is shared with students and staff.
- Identify close friends and staff who are most likely to be affected. Monitor these individuals when school reconvenes, and on anniversary dates of the incident.
- Be alert for repercussions among students and staff when school reconvenes. Check with the core group of friends and other at-risk people. Provide appropriate support services and referral options.

assist in keeping students separated.

### Action Steps: IF occurs on Bus

- Call UISD PD 6361 (Dispatch)
- Once reported DO NOT proceed with bus route.
- Stay in place until PD arrives.
- DISPATCH will report incident to superiors.
- Transportation shall report incident to the Office of Superintendent.
- Keep calm. IF suspect is on the bus keep victim and suspect separated. Bus monitor may

Impacts: School and District



## Active Shooter



### Situation Description

An active shooter or armed assailant is a person actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined or other populated area. In most cases, active shooters use firearms and follow no pattern or method in selecting victims.

### Threats

Active shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly. Typically, law enforcement must be immediately deployed to stop the shooting and mitigate harm to victims.

Because most incidents are over within minutes, staff must be prepared to deal with the situation until law enforcement arrives on scene.

### Role DERT

- Verify and assess incident reported.
- Determine appropriate plan of action and disseminate to all parties involved.
- Send pre-recorded School Messenger.

### Role of Administration:

- Activate LOCKDOWN
- Call 6361
- Contact the Office of the Superintendent and report information. Providing all pertinent information needed to appropriately handle the incident.
- Verify the information and obtain an accurate description of who, what, how many, and where the incident occurred. And have any announcement of the event come from the school.
- Maintain communication with staff updating information.

### Action Steps

- Follow LOCKDOWN procedures.
- Ensure you have Emergency Go-Kit.
- Call 6361. Provide clear and concise information about the nature of the emergency, number, and description of the assailant (if known), area of school where the assailant was last seen, number of

potential victims, actions taken by the school, and whether there are onsite security or law enforcement officers. The caller should remain on the line to provide updates.

- ❑ Initiate Incident Command System (ICS)
- ❑ Contact the Office of the Superintendent to start standard response protocol and support, including school bus mobilization (for evacuation purposes), parent reunification site preparation, and activation of the crisis communications plan (for example, parent, staff, and media notification protocols).
- ❑ Teachers, students, and all other staff should remain in lockdown and follow school safe conditions or response procedures until an ALL CLEAR is given. Teachers should also gather information about their classroom's immediate situation. Account for all students or other people sheltered in the room. Report findings when a communication link with the office and law enforcement has been established.

**Note:** Law enforcement will assume Incident Command when they arrive on the scene.

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### Post-Incident Procedures:

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- ❑ After the active shooter or assailant has been subdued, the Incident Commander will direct law enforcement to evacuate each classroom to the pre-designated relocation site determined by the DERT in collaboration with the Office of the Superintendent for family reunification.
- ❑ Teachers, students, and staff should follow the commands of law enforcement personnel during evacuation, and go to the assigned assembly areas as directed.
- ❑ Under no circumstances, unless directed by law enforcement, should anyone exit the school in their vehicle.
- ❑ Teachers will take attendance and move to the school buses for transport if necessary. Immediately report any missing students to a CERT who will communicate information to Admin, who will inform UISD PD.
- ❑ Assigned personnel will provide triage and medical assistance to victims. Document casualty and identifying information.
- ❑ Accompany any injured students who can be moved from the scene as directed by law enforcement

- ❑ Consider sending a school representative to accompany the injured to the hospital.
- ❑ Initiate the district approved Recovery Plan.

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#### Police Priorities During an Active Shooter

- Capture or neutralize the assailant as quickly as possible.
- Protect the lives and provide safety for those near the assailant.
- Protect the lives and provide safety for those in the general area.
- Provide for the safety of responding police and EMS.
- Contain the situation.
- Investigate after the event.
- Assist the school and community in efforts to return to normalcy

## Angry Visitors



### Situation Description

Even the best teachers and principals are at times faced with volatile, overwhelming, or overbearing parents. Parents are passionate about their children, and if a perceived wrong or mistreatment exists, they can become angry, irate, and lash out.

### Threats

A miscalculated response can backfire; it can fan the flames of discontent and even burn bridges that educators have worked hard to build between school and home.

### Action Steps

- Notify UISD Police.
- Invite parent into the office, away from eyes and ears that don't need to see or hear the exchange. Offer a seat, which communicates that you are willing to listen and try to find a solution to the parent's concern.
- Remain calm and show genuine concern for the parent's feelings. Becoming angry or defensive results in a power play, often leading to the parent feeling helpless and thus lashing out.
- Be open, inviting, and personable. Express a desire to want to resolve the issue or make things right.
- Allow parent to vent, but there are norms to having a civil conversation, such as behaving like an adult and refraining from using profanity. Often parents just want to be heard and not interrupted until they have had a chance to air their entire grievance.
- Validate the parent's feelings by acknowledging that you understand why they're upset and why they feel the way they do. Whether or not you're directly responsible for the parent's anger is irrelevant. Take responsibility, which tends to diffuse the anger and is the right thing to do for all parties involved.
- If the situation warrants apologize ... often this is all that parents want to hear.
- Acknowledge steps to resolve the complaint or issue, and avoid blame. Focus on what can be done.
- Problem-solve by asking parents what they would like you to do. Often parents don't have an

answer, but if they do, see if you can use some of their ideas in your action plan to resolve the issue.

- ❑ Follow up on what you said you would do. Go over the steps you have both taken to improve the situation and provide a progress report.
  
- ❑ Should a parent become belligerent, use profanities, or not listen to reason warn the individual that further disruption will result in removal from premises.
  
- ❑ File police/incident report. Contact the Office of the Superintendent and if situation merits a warning letter will be issued. Senate Bill 1553

## Assault (Including Physical and Sexual Assault or Rape)

### Situation Description

Assault is any intentional or reckless act that causes someone to fear or expect immediate unlawful force or personal violence. Assault on its own may not involve physical injury or contact, but a threat to life or limb where a student or staff member is threatened verbally is an offense.

*Sexual assault* (also called *rape*) is knowingly engaging in physical contact of a sexual nature with any person without the consent of that person. Impaired judgment because of the use of alcohol or other drugs is not a defense to a charge of sexual assault.

### Action Steps

- ❑ Determine the condition of the victim and give first aid. Consider calling EMS if needed (for an onsite incident).
- ❑ Call 6361 (Contact Child Protective Services if the victim is a minor.)
- ❑ It is not the role of school staff to investigate allegations of sexual assault. This is the responsibility of law enforcement. Any incident involving an allegation of a sexual assault should also be

reported to UISD Police. The school principal may initiate an investigation of a physical assault or fight, but it is advised to contact law enforcement when the allegation or incident is first reported. **Minimize the amount of personnel making contact with the student**

- ❑ Clear all people from the immediate area. Leave the scene undisturbed to allow professionals to collect evidence. Preserving evidence can be critical to the investigation and criminal prosecution of any assault.
- ❑ Secure video footage.
- ❑ Contact the parents or caregivers of the victim, unless circumstances indicate otherwise. Document the disclosure and ensure that the conversations with the student(s) involved or follow-up actions are recorded. This may be significant to later investigation or legal proceedings.
- ❑ Reassure the student that ongoing support will be provided and explain what may happen next.

- ❑ Staff must avoid any action that may compromise a police investigation.
- ❑ Refer all requests for information – from media, parents, etc. – to the superintendent.
- ❑ Refer to United Student Code of Conduct for disciplinary.
- ❑ Campus administration will establish a Transition Plan.



## Bioterrorism



### Situation Description

A bioterrorism attack is the deliberate release of viruses, bacteria, or other germs (agents) used to cause illness or death. Biological agents are organisms or toxins that can kill or incapacitate.

### Threats

Biological agents can be spread through the air, water, or in food. Terrorists may use biological agents because they can be extremely difficult to detect and do not cause illness for several hours to days.

A biological incident could create a mass casualty situation before its magnitude is known.

Because most incidents are over within minutes, staff must be prepared to deal with the situation until the appropriate resources arrive on scene.

### Role of Administrator:

- ❑ Communicate to staff
- ❑ Contact UISD Energy and Environmental Department (956) 473-7930

- ❑ If needed contact Local or State Public Health Office (956) 795-4900
- ❑ Notify the Office of the Superintendent

### Action Steps: Biological Attack

- ❑ The goal is to get medical aid and minimize further exposure to agents.

*Note:* It is likely a biological attack will only be known days later when people develop symptoms of the disease and public health officials inform the public of the attack.

- ❑ Contact local or state public health office if students or staff exhibit similar symptoms in greater than normal cases.
- ❑ Public health officials will provide specific treatment protocols, depending on the type of agent and whether it is contagious or non-contagious.

### Action Steps: Chemical Attack

- ❑ In a chemical attack, large groups of students and staff will become nauseous, experience blurred vision, and have difficulty

breathing. Take action immediately.

- ❑ The goal is to find clean air very quickly.
- ❑ Activate: SHELTER for incidents where the threat is inside and LOCKOUT for circumstances where the threat is outside.
- ❑ If attack is outdoors, and students and staff are outdoors, have them cover their mouths and noses, and seek shelter in the closest building. Close all windows and doors, and shut off the flow of air. If inside, stay inside and to the extent possible, move to an interior room and seal the room. Remain inside until an **ALL CLEAR** has been issued.
- ❑ If an attack is indoors, open windows and breathe fresh air. Shut off the flow of air; evacuate as soon as it is safe.

*Note:* Knowing when it is safe to evacuate will likely require

guidance from emergency officials. Evacuation in such attacks is not recommended because people may not be able to determine soon enough where it would be safe to evacuate.

- ❑ Shut off Air Condition if chemical agent is indoors.
- ❑ Once protected from chemical agent exposure, decontaminate by removing clothing and showering if possible.
- ❑ When conditions are safe to move about freely, seek medical treatment.

**Action Steps: Post-Incident**

- ❑ The Office of the Superintendent will work with campus administration on written campus communication.
- ❑

## Bomb Threat — Suspicious Envelope or Package



### Situation Description

A threat to place or explode a bomb on school property is an effective means of disrupting the school day, or at least an attempt to do so depending on the school's reaction.

Bomb threats may be delivered in writing, in person, over the telephone, or through the Internet, e-mail, or a secondary source. The most common method is by telephone.

### Threats

Bomb threats are serious until proven otherwise. They are often a means of retaliation by students, employees, or members of the community.

In most cases, the caller wants to create an atmosphere of anxiety and panic that will, in turn, result in disrupting normal school activities.

If a call is made to any campus/facility personnel must contact UISD Police for further investigation.

During state mandated testing days IF a bomb threat is received, the district has obtained approval to perform bomb sweeps in lieu of

evacuations for bomb threat by the City of Laredo Fire Department.

If the bomb threat is received on non-testing days the campus administration should HOLD.

Then, administration acts in a manner that reflects the best safety interests of students and staff.

### Action Steps: Basic Documentation

- ❑ Remain calm. Keep the caller on the line and try to get as much information as possible **DO NOT HANG UP**, even if the caller does.
- ❑ Try to keep the caller on the line talking to learn more information. Ask for the caller to repeat the message to confirm it. If possible, record the call. If not, **write down all the information obtained, using as many exact words as possible.**
- ❑ If possible, write a note to a colleague or office mate to call the authorities. Immediately after the call, don't hang up; from a different phone, call 9-1-1.

- ❑ If your phone has a display, copy the number from the window display.
- ❑ If the caller does not indicate the location of the bomb or the time of possible detonation, ask for this information.
- ❑ Pay particular attention to background noises that may give a clue as to the location of the caller.
- ❑ Listen closely to the voice (male or female), voice quality (calm or excited), accents, and speech impediments. Immediately after the caller hangs up, report the call to the principal.
- ❑ If a bomb threat is received by handwritten note, call 9-1-1. Handle the note as little as possible.
- ❑ If a bomb threat is received by email, call 9-1-1. Do not delete the message.
- ❑ If a bomb threat is found on campus, contain the area, contact admin and call 911.

**Action Steps:**

- ❑ Activate: HOLD
- ❑ Notify UISD PD immediately.
- ❑ UISD PD will dispatch bomb dog and additional officers who will assess the situation.

**Action Steps: Evacuation Procedures**

- ❑ After UISD PD assesses the situation the lead officer shall make a recommendation to the campus administrator whether the campus should be evacuated.
- ❑ After the school is evacuated, turn off all gas and fuel lines.
- ❑ Evacuate students and staff to a safe distance outside of the school buildings.
- ❑ DERT/Law Enforcement will assume command.
- ❑ Have teachers take attendance after evacuating. Report any missing students to your school's administration.
- ❑ DERT will advise if relocation is necessary.

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**Other procedures:**

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- ❑ Unless necessary encourage staff to minimize the use two-way radios or cellular phones; radio signals have the potential to detonate bombs.
- ❑ Do not activate the fire alarm.
- ❑ **Do not touch or move a suspicious package.**

**Action Steps: Recovery**

- ❑ Return to building after ALL CLEAR has been called.

- ❑ Administration should address staff and students through Public Address System.
- ❑ Admin in collaboration with the Office of the Superintendent will send out information regarding the incident.



## Bullying and Harassment

### Situation Description

Bullying and harassment are threats (both verbal and nonverbal) and behavior (physical) that substantially harm another's physical or emotional health or safety.

A number of specific behaviors – bullying, cyber bullying, dating violence, ethnic intimidation, harassment, hazing, and stalking – are often identified within this category.

### Threats

While definitions will vary by school and state, these behaviors have a direct negative impact on a child's access to education, can lead to physical and mental health problems, and affects students' sense of well-being.

Students who engage in or are the victims of these behaviors are the highest group for adverse outcomes, including suicide and acts of violence.

### Action Steps

- ❑ Follow district approved behavior management plan and consult United ISD Discipline Management if needed.
- ❑ When reported, school staff must take immediate and appropriate corrective action.
- ❑ Administration should interview the victim or witness, recording the information obtained, and contact law enforcement in all cases of sexual assault, harassment, or intimidation.
- ❑ Restore a non-discriminatory environment for the victim of bullying or harassment.

## Child Abuse and Neglect

### Situation Description

Parents have a fundamental right to raise their children as they see fit, and society presumes parents will act in their children’s best interest. When parents or guardians do not protect children from harm or meet their basic needs, society has a responsibility to intervene to protect the health and welfare of children.

Federal and state laws and sound professional standards of practice must guide any intervention into family life on behalf of children.

### Threats

Four types of child maltreatment:

- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse

### Action Steps

School personnel’s duty to report exists regardless of whether the abuse or neglect occurs at home, at school, or elsewhere. Where those laws or regulations exist, follow them. In the absence of any laws or

procedures for reporting child abuse and neglect, the following steps are recommended:

- Contact the school nurse, counselor, and principal.
- If physical abuse is suspected and a nurse is unable to examine and refer the child within 1 hour of discovery, immediately contact Child Protective Services or law enforcement so the agency may begin its investigation while the child is still in school.

### Documentation

- Fill out the **referral form** and provide it to Child Protective Services. Make copies for school files, the nurse, and the district’s health or student services administrator.
- If the student is at risk and Child Protective Services has not taken action by the end of the school day, be persistent in contacting the agency to determine what should be done with the child.
- Administrator should contact local police department.

Impacts: School

## Civil Disturbance, Including Student Walkout and Demonstration



### Situation Description

A civil disturbance is a riot or out-of-control demonstration that could threaten the welfare and safety of staff and students. This can include both small and large groups and can occur inside or outside the building, or in the area of the school campus.

### Threats

Student walkouts and other acts of civil disobedience can occur for any number of reasons, including race issues, immigration, school shooting anniversaries, and perceived injustices.

These events are rarely spur-of-the-moment, which gives school staff time to prepare for such an event.

### Action Steps: Investigation and Plan of Action

- ❑ Collect information on upcoming events and important issues.
- ❑ Report information received to the Office of the Superintendent who will determine how to handle the situation at hand.

- ❑ If applicable work alongside law enforcement to confirm the accuracy of the information.
- ❑ Often monitoring such situations with the goal of establishing a balance between disciplined environment for education and allowing students' freedom of speech creates a more positive atmosphere and relationship.
- ❑ In collaboration with the Office of the Superintendent prepare statement to parents via Messenger.

### Organized Demonstration

- ❑ Under counsel from the Office of the Superintendent, campus administration may devise a plan on how to appropriately address the incident reported.
- ❑ Convene relevant district and community personnel and partners to coordinate response plans to a planned walkout, demonstration, or protest. Communicate the response plan to district and school staff, parents, and appropriate agencies.

- ❑ Designate school staff to accompany students on their walkout route or in the demonstration area. Ensure the safety of students at all times.
- ❑ Retain video footage.
- ❑ Campus Administration will work with the Office of the Superintendent on putting together a letter of notification to parents.

### **Riot**

- ❑ Campus goes into **LOCKDOWN**.
- ❑ Campus administration and UISD Police will encourage students to remain on campus.
- ❑ Retain video footage.
- ❑ Campus Administration shall follow the Student Code of Conduct and UISD Police if necessary.

### **Action Steps: Recovery**

- ❑ When ALL CLEAR is given conduct business as usual.
- ❑ When students return to school, staff should take the opportunity to have a conversation with them about the rights and wrongs of the situation and to consider whether there are better ways for their voices to be heard. This promotes the spirit of education and the opportunity for students to express themselves.

## Perceived Threat



### Situation Description

Perceived threats are conditions or situations – often community-based – that have the potential to affect a large number of people. School officials in charge must defuse any irrational response.

### Threats

Examples of perceived threats include:

- Racial events
- School rivalry situations
- Events in which a group feels left out or unrepresented
- Introduction of new school procedures without adequate warning
- Gang-related activities
- Rumors about people with contagious conditions

### Action Steps

- Project a sense of calm and control.
- Gather detailed and accurate information about the perceived threat.

- If necessary, activate the CERT and DERT to assess the situation and develop a response plan.
- Give specific information to appropriate staff and those individuals or groups affected by the situation.
- Designate someone to serve as a single point of contact for controlling rumors. Keep lines of communication open; a feeling that secrets are being kept can increase the sense of threat.
- Assign trained individuals to speak with small groups of students and staff.
- Take all actions that have been determined necessary to prevent a more serious situation from developing.

### Preventive or Supportive Actions

- Identify situations in advance and develop a plan to address them.
- Establish open lines of communication with students and staff to learn information on perceived threat and response effort.



## Threats of Violence

### Situation Description

Threats of violence are verbal or written threats with the intent to mimic a high-profile incident, such as a shooting or bombing.

### Preventive or Supportive Actions

- ❑ Inform students that all threats will be investigated and individuals making false threats shall be punished to the fullest extent of the law.
- ❑ Remind students to immediately report any threat – verbal or written – to school staff.
- ❑ Campuses shall incorporate bathroom monitoring procedures. Designated school staff should check restrooms every 20-30 minutes looking for any new markings on the wall, notes left behind, etc.
- ❑ Communicate what has been done to ensure the safety of students and staff.
  - Send all staff a memo, email, or voicemail.
  - Notify parents in a timely manner when appropriate.
  - Update key opinion leaders.
  - Inform students.

### Action Steps

- ❑ Preserve any written evidence for police, such as email, note, message written on wall, text message, video footage.
- ❑ When reported, immediately notify law enforcement authorities and the Office of the Superintendent.
- ❑ The DERT will notify other law enforcement agencies and request assistance if needed.
- ❑ Follow protocol in this manual under “Threats” and treat all threats seriously. Do everything possible to ensure that building occupants are safe.
- ❑ If time allows hold an Emergency Staff Meeting to discuss the incident at hand. If there is no time for staff meeting (threats received after hours) inform staff through campus wide message system.
- ❑ The DERT shall determine if the incident warrants school closure.
- ❑ The DERT will handle interviews with media partners.
- ❑ Create a School Messenger to notify parents of protective measures put in place to ensure

the safety of students, staff and visitors.

**Action Steps: Threat Confirmed and Suspect in Custody**

- ❑ Upon confirming a threat and identifying a suspect campus administration along with UISD PD Campus Officer shall enact the following procedures:
  1. IF suspect is a minor and a student of UISD administration along with UISD PD shall contact parent/guardian
  2. UISD PD will conduct welfare check at suspect's home making contact with parent/legal guardian (searching for a presence of weapons, whether the weapons are locked and if the suspect has access to the weapons).
  3. Based on the findings of the welfare check, UISD PD shall make a recommendation on whether the student can/cannot return to school.

**Action Steps: Recommendation to Return to School**

- ❑ Law Enforcement will notify parent/guardian(s) that a parent/guardian must accompany student to school the next day.

- ❑ Student will not be allowed to carry a backpack the next day.
- ❑ Upon receiving recommendation from UISD PD campus administration will work collaboratively with UISD PD and Office of the Superintendent to determine appropriate plan of action.
- ❑ Campus Administration and UISD PD will meet with parent/guardian and student to discuss the disciplinary actions.

**Action Steps: Recommendation: NOT return to school/Prosecution**

- ❑ Upon receiving the recommendation to prosecute from UISD PD, campus administration will work collaboratively with Webb County Attorney's Office, UISD PD, and Laredo PD.

**Action Steps: Post Incident**

- ❑ Consider a school-wide assembly for students with the principal, superintendent, and law enforcement to discuss the seriousness of threats. Focus on 2 areas:
  - Explain facts about the incident and reassure students that everything possible is being done to keep them safe.
  - Explain the consequences if students are caught making

threats and the seriousness of the pranks.

student. Counselor shall document outcome of check in and retain.

- ❑ Encourage parents to talk to their children about the seriousness of prank threats.
- ❑ Show PSA
- ❑ Debrief with staff reflecting on how incident was handled, what worked well, and what could be done differently.

**Action Steps:** [Transition Process](#)

- ❑ Campus administrators shall work collaboratively with Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Placement (JJAEP) and UISD PD to develop and implement UISD Individual Student Transition Plan to include a Student Contract for student. Both plan and contract should formalize expectations.
- ❑ Campus Administration will schedule a meeting with parent/guardian(s), UISD PD, and a campus counselor who will assist with the transition process at least two weeks before transition begins.
- ❑ Campus staff shall promote open channels of communication with both parent and student.
- ❑ Assigned campus counselor shall conduct “check ins” with student. A “check in” is a sporadic meeting between counselor and



## Fight, Including Gang Violence



### Situation Description

Physical fights typically involve two or more combatants who have chosen to use physical force to resolve a conflict or argument.

Unfortunately, today, many of our students carry weapons. Fights that involve weapons, such as guns, knives, pipes, and clubs, are a major cause of serious injuries and death.

### Action Steps: During a Fight

- ❑ Go to the scene of the incident. Get help along the way.
- ❑ Assess and evaluate quickly:
  - What happened, who is there, and what is likely to happen
  - The size and number of students engaged in the fight
  - If any weapons are present or if gangs are involved
- ❑ Intervening staff must give specific commands in a firm, authoritative voice. Use student names if known. If not, mentally note physical descriptions.
- ❑ Send for assistance of other adults, including administration or law enforcement. Indicate

whether any medical assistance is required.

- ❑ Staff should not put themselves between fighting students if they can avoid it.
- ❑ Physical force should be used to separate fighting students only if one is about to cause severe harm to the other.

### Action Steps: After a Fight

- ❑ Remove participants to a neutral location.
- ❑ Support victims and seek medical attention, if necessary.

### Preventive or Supportive Actions

- ❑ Be alert to patterns of stress and agitation in students. Be familiar with information about managing a potentially dangerous person.
- ❑ Schools have implemented a host of programs to prevent fights, including peer mediation and conflict resolution to reduce the number of physical conflicts. These programs teach students to resolve arguments and fights peacefully.

Impacts: School



## Hostage Situation



### Situation Description

Hostage taking is a violent offense involving holding people against their will, exercising or attempting to exercise control over someone by using force or the threat of force or by acting or speaking violently.

### Threats

Hostage situations are very unpredictable and dangerous. In any hostage situation, the safety of people involved (both directly and indirectly) is the top priority. Any actions taken should be done with this in mind.

### Role of DERT:

- Verify and assess incident reported.
- Determine appropriate plan of action and disseminate to all parties involved.
- Prepare a Reunification Site
- Mobilize Buses if needed
- Communication- Media Outlets, parents, and other district staff

### Role of Administration:

- Contact the Office of the Superintendent and report information.
- Verify the information.
- Activate ICS and CERT

### Action Steps

- To minimize harm to students, staff, and others, activate: LOCKDOWN
- CALL 6361. The caller should remain on the line to provide updates. Provide clear and concise information about:
  - Nature of the emergency
  - Description of hostage taker (if known)
  - Area of school where incident is
  - Number of hostages
  - Any known weapons (observed by staff or mentioned by hostage taker)
  - Statements made by the hostage taker
  - Actions taken by the school

- Whether security or law enforcement officers are onsite
- ❑ Teachers, students, and all other staff should remain in school until an ALL CLEAR is given.

*Note:* Law enforcement will assume Incident Command when officers arrive on the scene.

**Action Steps: Dealing with a Hostage Taker**

- ❑ Try to keep suspect calm.
- ❑ UISD PD shall assume command and establish communication with suspect.
- ❑ Upon assessing the incident UISD PD may evacuate area/entire school.
- ❑ DO NOT try to approach hostage takers.
- ❑ DO NOT make any statements that might upset or enrage them. Do not mention police or what might happen as a result of their actions.
- ❑ DO NOT make any guarantees or promises.
- ❑ DO NOT argue with hostage takers; be respectful.

Impacts: School



## Unauthorized Visitor



### Situation Description

An intruder is someone in the school building who has not followed established visitor procedures and may or may not be a safety hazard to the schools.

Any school personnel observing someone in the school building who is not wearing a Visitor's Badge, appears suspicious, or out of place should either approach the person and ask for the person's name and purpose in the building, or should contact the main office for help.

### Role of DERT

- Verify and assess incident reported.
- Determine appropriate plan of action and disseminate to all parties involved.
- Prepare a Reunification Site
- Mobilize Buses if needed
- Communication- Media Outlets, parents, and other district staff

### Role of Administration:

- Contact the Office of the Superintendent and report information.
- Verify the information.
- Activate ICS and CERT

### Action Steps: Unauthorized Visitor Does Not Pose a Safety Threat

- Greet the person and ask the purpose of the visit to the school.
- Escort the person to the office to sign in as a visitor. Ensure the person is aware of school policy for visitors for future reference.
- Depending on the circumstances and the intruder's demeanor, consider contacting law enforcement to report the incident. If the unauthorized visitor appears agitated or irrational or refuses to leave the building peacefully, **contact UISD PD Campus Officer on campus to assist with the situation.**

- ❑ If possible, follow the person at a safe distance to determine the direction the individual heads.
- ❑ UISD Police shall verify the person's identity and address so the unauthorized visitor can be warned by registered mail not to return to the school.

**Action Steps: Intruder Is Armed or Poses a Safety Hazard**

- ❑ Initiate LOCKDOWN or EVACUATION (UISD PD shall determine if evacuation is needed in one area to isolate intruder or if a campus wide evacuation is needed).
- ❑ Call 6361 immediately. The caller should remain on the line to provide updates. Provide clear and concise information about:
  - Nature of the emergency
  - Description of the intruder (if known)
  - Area of school where incident is located
  - Number of students and staff who may be in the threat area
  - Any known weapons (observed by staff or mentioned by the intruder)
  - Statements made by the intruder
  - Actions taken by the school
  - Whether security or law enforcement officers are onsite

- ❑ Remain calm. Do not raise your voice to avoid upsetting the intruder. Tone and demeanor will strongly influence the outcome of the incident.
- ❑ If possible, remove students and staff from the area of the intruder. Never try to disarm someone with a weapon. Avoid sudden moves or gestures. Do not try to be a hero.
- ❑ Make every effort to make the person feel that you are cooperating.
- ❑ If violence is directed toward a student passenger, immediately contact emergency response and intervene only if it is safe to do so.
- ❑ If the intruder can be confined to one area of the building, law enforcement may determine that evacuation is necessary. The more closely contained the intruder can be kept, the less danger there is to others and the easier it is for the police to apprehend the person. Law enforcement officers on site will ensure that no student or staff exits the building so as to be exposed to the intruder.

**Action Steps: For School Bus Drivers (When an Intruder Is on the Bus)**

- ❑ Stay calm and maintain control. Do not overreact to the situation.

- ❑ Look for ways to diffuse the situation.
- ❑ Look for ways to alert emergency response. (i.e. turn on STOP SIGNALS and LIGHTS).
- ❑ If possible, keep the school bus parked in a public location and open the bus doors.
- ❑ If no students are on board, look for a way to escape the bus.
- ❑ Make every effort to make the person feel that you are cooperating.
- ❑ If a weapon is involved, do not try to grab it or make sudden movements.
- ❑ If violence is directed toward a student passenger, immediately contact emergency response and intervene only if it is safe to do so.
- ❑ Remain calm until help arrives.

**Action Steps: Post-Incident**

- ❑ DERT will inform and provide updates to the media.

## Missing Student, Including Abducted or Kidnapped Students



### Situation Description

A student is *missing* if that person is unaccounted for at school, on school property, at a school activity, or while traveling to and from school.

*Abduction* or *kidnapping* is the unauthorized and unlawful removal of a student from school property, a school activity (for example, field trip or sporting event), or from a school bus without consent either from school officials or parent or guardian.

### Situation Description for handling a student with Special Needs

Students with cognitive disabilities or autism require pre-incident planning as part of the school emergency response procedures. These students generally have no real sense of danger and have a history of unpredictable behaviors that include straying from home and school.

Maintaining updated behavior intervention plans (BIPs) that outline replacement behaviors, reinforcement preferences, and reactive measures for each student at risk, along with monitoring and analyzing behavior data to determine potential behavioral triggers, should help prepare staff to

facilitate a rapid, coordinated, effective response when a child is missing.

- Develop a list of possible places the student may be trying to reach, for example, home, pool, or favorite store.
- Provide information to the police of known potential hiding places and hazardous locations near the school, for example, sheds, parks, lakes, ponds, swimming pools, railroad tracks, etc.
- Have multiple copies of the student's photograph readily available for search teams. Photos will help first responders and staff who are unfamiliar with the student assist in a search.

### Role of DERT

- Determine appropriate plan of action and disseminate to all parties involved.
- Communication- Police, Media Outlets, parents, and other district staff

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### Role of Administration:

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- Verify the information.
- Activate HOLD
- Contact the Office of the Superintendent and report information.
- Activate ICS and CERT

### Action Steps: For a Missing Student

When you discover that a student is missing, immediately initiate the following:

- Activate: HOLD
- Document all actions taken.
- Immediately inform school administration. Provide a physical description of the missing student, including type and color of clothing.
- Inform Campus Police- Provide the following information:
  - Description of student — name, physical appearance, type and color of clothing
  - Summary of when the student disappeared and the student's last location
  - Missing student's home address, phone number, and parents' contact information

- Interview friends of the missing student and the last person to see the student.
- Start a search of the school building, the grounds, or the last known location.
- Check school records to determine if a legal custody issue may exist. Treat custody dispute cases as a possible abduction or kidnapping.
- Once the student is found, notify the appropriate school and district personnel involved in responding to the incident.
- Contact parents or guardians to report the absence or issue.

### Action Steps: For an Abducted or Kidnapped Student

When you discover that a student has possibly been abducted, immediately inform the school administration and UISD PD Campus Officer. Provide a physical description of the missing student.

- Provide the following information:
  - Description of the abductor — physical appearance, type and color of clothing
  - Description of the vehicle — make, model, color, and license plate number

- Description of student — name, physical appearance, type and color of clothing
  - Description of when and where the abduction occurred, including where the child was last seen and the direction they were headed
  - Victim’s home address, phone number, and parents’ contact information
- ❑ Contact parents or guardians to report the absence or issue.
  - ❑ Check school records to determine if a legal custody issue may exist. Treat custody dispute cases as a possible abduction or kidnapping.
  - ❑ Keep any witnesses (adults and students) in the main office and separated until law enforcement arrives to take statements.
  - ❑ Secure video footage
  - ❑ Work alongside Laredo PD to issue an Amber Alert.

**Action Steps: After Locating Missing Student**

- ❑ Contact parents or guardians to tell them that their child has been found and about the child’s well-being.
- ❑ Consider any modifications to a classroom, building, or school grounds that may be necessary to

ensure the student will be unable to leave again.

- ❑ Consider the need for more staff members at critical times of school day.
- ❑ Consider the need to inform other parents of the incident, as well as safety measures that have been put into place after the incident.

**Preventive or Supportive Actions**

- ❑ Make sure school office personnel have a list of students who are not to be released to anyone except a particular parent or guardian. Flag this status on the student’s emergency card or contact information.
- ❑ Before releasing a student to anyone other than the parent or guardian on the list, have the school secretary or office personnel check with the custodial parent for approval. The staff member should note the time and date of the phone approval.
- ❑ When a parent calls asking that a child be released from school, confirm the identity of the caller (by a return call to the parent) before permitting the child to leave the school. If any doubt exists, write the message and phone number down, and make a return call after crosschecking the

phone number with those on the child's emergency card.



## Cyber Attack

### PEREZ

#### Situation Description

A cyber attack is deliberate exploitation of computer systems, technology-dependent enterprises and networks.

Cyber attacks use malicious code to alter computer code, logic, or data, resulting in disruptive consequences that can compromise data and lead to cybercrimes, such as business interruption, and information and identity theft.

Malicious software, commonly known as *malware*, is any software that brings harm to a computer system. Malware can be in the form of worms, viruses, Trojans, spyware, and adware that steal protected data, delete documents, or add software not approved by the school or district.

#### Threats

As cloud services and data-management systems become more robust, many schools, districts, and educational consortiums are using online networks to store data such as student and employee information systems and records for attendance and grades that parents can access from their personal computer.

The most common form of cyber attacks on school systems is a *distributed denial-of-service* attack, or a DDoS. These are designed to overwhelm the targeted IP address with requests, with the goal of interrupting or suspending service.

#### Action Steps

- ❑ Educate students and staff to keep an eye out for phishing scams, which is typically an email or website designed to install malicious software onto a computer.
- ❑ Notify your network system administrator immediately if you suspect a cyber attack. The sooner IT staff can clean the potentially infected computer, the less the damage to the computer and other computers in the network.
- ❑ Staff should immediately report if they believe they revealed sensitive information. This will allow district personnel to be alert for any suspicious or unusual activity.
- ❑ District personnel should notify law enforcement so an official record of the incident exists. Report online crime or fraud to

the Federal Bureau of  
Investigation's Internet Crime  
Complaint Center (IC3) at  
<http://www.ic3.gov/default.asp>  
[x](#).

- ❑ Report identity theft to the  
Federal Trade Commission at  
<https://www.identitytheft.gov/>

## Suicide

### Situation Description

Suicidal behavior – fatal and non-fatal – is one of the most traumatic occurrences school personnel will face. A comprehensive plan to prevent youth suicide and to intervene when a student is in crisis can significantly improve the ability of schools to respond quickly, effectively, and with the least disruption to school routines.

### Threats

According to the Centers for Disease Control, suicide is the third leading cause of death among children (ages 10 to 14) and second in youth (ages 15 to 19) in the United States. Suicidal ideation is more common. Nearly 1 in 5 high school students have considered death by suicide.

In many states, laws exist requiring qualified school professionals to assess students' level of imminent risk when they appear to be at risk to attempt suicide.

Responding to a student who has expressed suicidal intentions requires prompt attention and the need to implement key principles. A thought of suicide is a sensitive predictor of a suicide attempt. Therefore, intervening at the stage of a student's contemplation of suicide

is essential as it may avoid an attempt, or worse, a final act.

### Action Steps: Suicidal Ideation and Threats

- ❑ Take all comments about suicidal thoughts seriously, especially if a student shares details of a suicide plan. Immediately report concerns to an administrator or school counselor.
- ❑ DO NOT leave the student alone. Take immediate action to isolate the student posing the threat and prevent access to potential weapons (if known).
- ❑ Under no circumstances should an untrained person try to assess the severity of suicidal risk; leave all assessment of threat, attempts, or other risk factors to appropriate professionals.

#### Note

To convey all warning signs and risk factors identified, use a *Risk Assessment Referral Form*. (See Additional Resources later.)

- ❑ Notify parents or guardians in person. Only release the student to a parent or guardian, law enforcement official, or emergency medical personnel.

- ❑ If a peer alerted staff to the situation, a debriefing for this person is important and may include further intervention.

#### NSPRA Tip

If a student threatens suicide or manifests other self-destructive behaviors, school staff reaction and responsiveness could positively resolve the crisis. Successful crisis intervention involves establishing a supportive relationship with the student. Intervention can be technically easy, but emotionally difficult.

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#### NSPRA Tip

In Student Safety Plans, include procedures for ensuring that students with suicidal ideations will receive a psychological or mental health assessment before returning to school. The assessment must include a recommendation that the student is safe to return to school, and a psychologist or mental health professional should sign it. Stress to the parent or guardian the importance of general safety planning and restricting access to means of suicide.

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#### Action Steps: Suicide Attempt on School Property or at a School Event

- ❑ Call 9-1-1 immediately. If necessary, administer first-aid and other lifesaving practices.
- ❑ Take immediate action to isolate the person posing a threat.
- ❑ To minimize harm to students, staff, and others, start school safe condition or response protocol, such as a school lockdown or evacuation.

- ❑ Notify the parent or guardian.
- ❑ So support can be provided as necessary, prepare communication to school staff and schools that siblings attend.
- ❑ Contact the superintendent and communication offices to start district emergency response support, including activating the crisis communication plan (for example, parent, staff, and media notification protocols).
- ❑ Provide care to other students who are most profoundly affected. Determine the type of support needed, including support stations or counseling rooms.
- ❑ Consider rescheduling any immediate stressful academic exercises or tests, if necessary.

#### Action Steps: After a Student Death by Suicide

- ❑ Start mobilizing the School Emergency Response Team. Consider additional grief counseling personnel from other schools or local agencies.
- ❑ To verify death and get the facts surrounding the death, have the principal contact the family, law enforcement, or coroner.

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#### Note

It is important to know the facts to reduce imitative behaviors and to focus on means restriction strategies for parents, as well as the school.

Gather any information the family wants to make known, such as funeral arrangements, visitations, etc.

- ❑ Organize an all-staff meeting before school resumes to provide:
  - Details of the incident
  - Uniform announcement for staff to read in classrooms
  - Classroom discussion points
  - Opportunities for students to express their feelings
- ❑ Contact the superintendent and communication offices to start district emergency response support, including activating the Crisis Communication Plan (for example, parent, staff, and media notification protocols).
- ❑ Provide care to other students who are most profoundly affected. Determine the type of support needed, including support stations or counseling rooms.
- ❑ Consider rescheduling any immediate stressful academic exercises or tests, if necessary.

#### NSPRA Tip

Avoid assemblies for notification and do not use

#### Handling the Student's Belongings

School desks and lockers may serve as uncomfortable reminders of the deceased student. Consider procedures for handling these personal effects.

Discuss with family members to identify a time to return all personal belongings to them. Ideally, the student's belongings should be collected after school hours and made available in the front office so that family members are not burdened with this task.

Have a member of the school's Emergency Response Team or the student's teacher be available for the family members when they arrive because this will be an emotional time for them.

Newsletters and other communications serve as traumatic reminders of the death. Make sure that the name of the deceased is removed from any mailing lists and phone notifications.

impersonal announcements over the public address system. Notify students in small, individual classrooms through teachers or School Emergency Response Team members.

#### NSPRA Tip

When informing students, it is important to use the phrase "death by suicide" to underscore that you are willing to discuss this difficult topic. It is preferable to avoid "committed suicide" (which may imply a criminal act). Included in the message should be the importance of sharing any concern for safety of others with a trusted adult.

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## Re-Entering School After a Suicide Attempt

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In responding to suicide attempts and other traumas, focus efforts on making the student's return to school comfortable. Because families exposed to a suicide attempt experience considerable guilt and fear, they are more likely to disclose that a son or daughter has made an attempt if they know the school has a helpful, non-threatening manner of dealing with the issue.

A student who attempts suicide often is at greater risk for a suicide in the months after the crisis. It is extremely important to closely monitor his or her re-entry into school and to maintain close contact with the parents and mental health professionals working with that student.

Assuming that the student will be absent for a period of time and possibly hospitalized in a treatment facility, follow these steps:

- ❑ Obtain a written release of information signed by the parents. This makes it possible for school personnel to share confidential information with treatment providers.
- ❑ Ask if the returning student has special requests about what the school says and does.
- ❑ Inform the student's teachers about the number of probable days of absence.
- ❑ Instruct teachers to give the students assignments to be completed, if appropriate.
- ❑ Maintain contact with the student to keep him or her informed of the latest developments in the school, if appropriate. If the student has a previous positive relationship with a trusted staff member, provide support to that staff member in maintaining ongoing contact with the student.
- ❑ Seek recommendations for after-care from the student's therapist. If the student has been hospitalized, have a Crisis Intervention Team member attend the discharge meeting at the hospital.
- ❑ Have the Crisis Intervention Team member convey relevant, non-confidential information to appropriate school staff about the after-care plan.
- ❑ Once the student returns to school, have a Crisis Intervention Team member

maintain regular contact with him or her.

- ❑ Maintain contact with the parents. Give them regular progress reports and other appropriate information. Ask them to keep you informed of any changes in the after-care plan.



## Suicide “Copycats” and Clusters

### Situation Description

A suicide in the school community can heighten the likelihood, in the subsequent weeks, of “copycat” suicide attempts and threats among those who are especially vulnerable to the effects of a suicide.

### Threats

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) define a *suicide cluster* as a group of suicides or suicide attempts, or both, that occur closer together in time and space than would normally be expected in a given community.

Many think clusters occur through a process of “contagion” in which earlier suicides influence suicides that occur later in the cluster.

To prevent further tragedies, you must carefully monitor students who are considered to be especially susceptible to depression and suicide and take appropriate action if they are identified as high risk. These

efforts require a limited, rather than school-wide, response.

### School Strategies for Preventing “Contagion” After a Suicide

- Pay close attention to those most affected by the suicide, those closest to the victim or who may have witnessed the suicide scene, students at high risk, and those who have been suicidal in the past.
- Offer additional supportive services and give those who are affected opportunities to express their feelings in one-on-one or group discussions.
- Ensure that all staff are alert to any talk of suicide and take any threat seriously.
- Encourage students to tell any adult in the school if they are concerned about another student.
- Track students at risk and contact them daily.

## Overdose, Including Alcohol, Medication, and Substance Abuse

### Situation Description

An overdose is a medical emergency, characterized by:

- Slowed breathing and heart rate
- Loss of consciousness
- Disorientation
- Slurred speech,
- Clammy, cold skin which may appear as a blush
- Vomiting
- Agitation
- Loss of motor control

### Threats

As soon as possible, a law enforcement or emergency response team should evaluate anyone deemed to be a danger to themselves or others.

### Action Steps

- Call 9-1-1 immediately. If the person is not breathing or if breathing is dangerously weak, begin CPR.
- Do not leave the victim alone. If unconscious, carefully roll the person onto the left side to prevent choking if vomiting begins.
- Determine:
  - What the victim may have overdosed on – ask the victim or friends who were with the victim
  - If any other students used the substance
  - What type of alcohol or drug was consumed, the amount or dosage, the time period that the ingestion occurred, and if there are any empty pill bottles, etc.
- If the victim becomes aggressive, remove from the area students and others who may be at risk.
- To allow for law enforcement interviews, isolate witnesses from the student population and from one another.

## Threat of Violence

### Situation Description

The threat of violence in schools is often uttered as a threat in a variety of forms:

- Verbal (direct or passing comment)
- Written (note or diary entry)
- Online (social media or chat room)

While a vast number of these threats are anonymous and often turn out to be a hoax or an off-hand comment made in anger, others are more direct or a retaliatory impulsive act.

### Threats

The impact of violent threats extends beyond the classroom, directly sending fear and panic among students, families, school staff, and the community.

Several recent studies show bomb and shooting threats make up the majority of threats of violence. And, electronic devices and social media apps are fueling the growth in these types of threats, the latter due largely to the anonymity that using

apps like Yik Yak and After School provides.

A *terroristic threat* is when a person threatens to commit any crime of violence against someone with the intent to terrorize. Because this is a speech-based crime, it can be difficult to determine if a person's actions constitute a criminal offense.

### Action Steps

- Treat all threats seriously and investigate the threat promptly and efficiently. Refer threats to commit any crime of violence against someone to law enforcement to assist in determining "intent" and "means" (or capability) to carry out the threat.
- Start a threat assessment process
- Take the appropriate disciplinary and criminal enforcement steps.
- Document the threats and actions taken.

## Threat Assessment in Schools

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One of the lasting lessons and legacies of the 1999 Columbine High School tragedy and subsequent school shootings is that school and public safety officials must treat threats seriously and have protocols in place to assess and manage threats to school safety.

Threat assessment rests on two critical principles:

- ❑ First, all threats and all threat makers are not equal.
- ❑ Second, most threat makers are unlikely to carry out their threat.

However, threats of violence must not be taken as illegitimate or brushed off as “kids will be kids.” You must consider threats serious and fully investigate them.

Three questions often asked when assessing school threats are:

1. What is the motivation of the person making the threat and the credibility of the threat?
2. Does the person have access to or have information about how to carry out the threat (for example, bomb-making instructions, weapons, etc.)?
3. Does the person have access to the weapons or tools – and the capability – to carry out the threat?

We know the answers to questions 2 and 3 are likely, “Yes.” But it is harder to assess both the person’s motivation and credibility of the threat because it involves making a judgment call based on limited information or knowledge.

The primary purpose of a threat assessment is to prevent targeted violence. The threat assessment process centers on an analysis of the facts and evidence of behavior in a given situation, rather than using a “profile” checklist of specific characteristics as criteria.

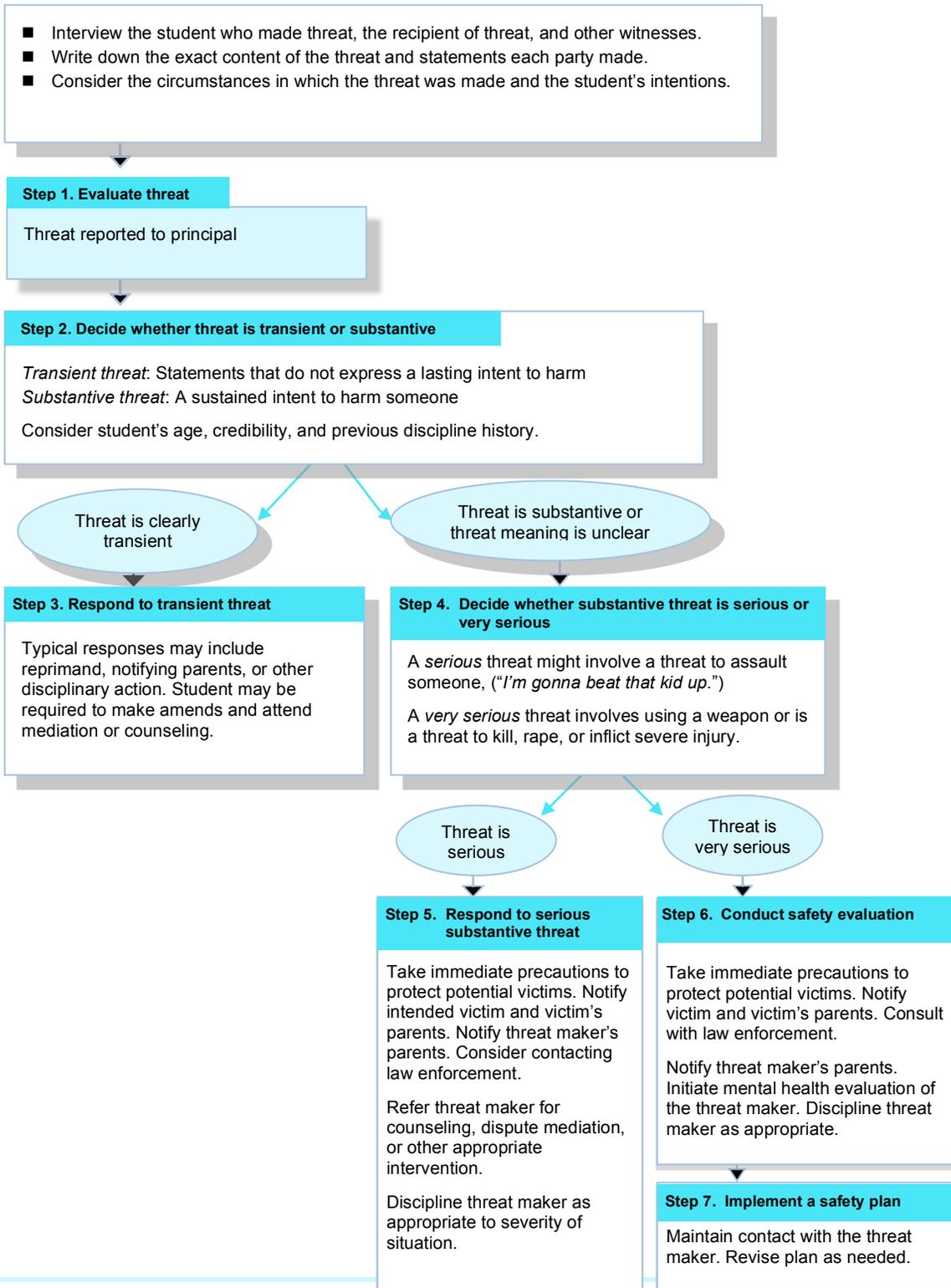
The appraisal of risk in a threat assessment focuses on actions, communications, and specific circumstances that might suggest the person intends to mount an attack and is engaged in planning or preparing for that event.

**Six principles form the foundation of the threat assessment process**

1. Targeted violence is the end result of an understandable, and often discernible, process of thinking and behavior.
2. Targeted violence stems from an interaction among the individual, the situation, the setting, and the target.
3. An investigative, skeptical, inquisitive mindset is critical to successful threat assessment.
4. Effective threat assessment is based on facts, rather than characteristics or “traits.”
5. An integrated systems approach should guide threat assessment inquiries and investigations.
6. The central question in a threat assessment inquiry or investigation is whether a student poses a threat, not whether the student has made a threat.

*Source:* U.S. Secret Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the U.S. Department of Education

# Threat Assessment Decision Tree





## Biological Threats and Hazards

Biological hazards are organic substances that pose a threat to the health of humans through illness and infectious diseases. The sources can cause a variety of health effects ranging from skin irritation and allergies to infections and serious illness.

Biological agents enter the body through inhalation, absorption (*through breaks in the skin*), ingestion (*swallowing*), or injection. They can multiply quickly and may be passed from one person to another. Exposure to biological hazards is widespread and not always obvious, but can strike people of all ages. People with compromised immune systems are often more susceptible and the biological agent has a greater, more long-lasting impact.

Biological agents capable of causing disease are called *pathogens*.

Common diseases include:

- ❑ **Bacterial:** Tuberculosis, tetanus, conjunctivitis (*pink eye*), food and blood poisoning
- ❑ **Fungal:** Mold, ringworm, thrush
- ❑ **Viral:** Influenza, SARS, hepatitis, measles, West Nile Virus

The best way to prevent illness is to reduce or eliminate exposure to biological agents. Tips to protect against infection include:

- ❑ Practice good personal hygiene, especially regular hand washing, which is one of the best ways to prevent transmitting infection.
- ❑ Keep immunizations up-to-date.

- ❑ Ensure any environment that might harbor bio-hazards (for example, fans or ventilations systems) is regularly maintained, cleaned, and sterilized.
- ❑ Often clean and disinfect work surfaces.
- ❑ Clean up spills immediately.
- ❑ Handle and dispose all bio-hazardous waste materials safely. Always handle blood and any other bodily fluids as if it can be infectious. If injury or bleeding occur, handle every person in a manner that minimizes exposure to blood and body fluids.
- ❑ Wear personal protective equipment (for example, gloves, masks, eye protection).

## Allergic Reaction

### Situation Description

An allergic reaction is the body's response to foreign substances, called an *allergen*, which triggers the immune system. The immune system normally protects the body from harmful agents such as bacteria and toxins by causing antibodies to respond to allergens.

### Threats

Some allergens such as food, medication, insect stings, and latex can trigger a severe, systemic allergic reaction called *anaphylaxis*.

- ❑ *Anaphylaxis* is a severe allergic reaction that occurs rapidly and causes a life-threatening response involving systems of the entire body. It is a medical emergency requiring immediate treatment and follow-up care. Deaths have occurred in schools because of delays in recognizing and responding to symptoms with immediate treatment and further medical interventions.
- ❑ *Food allergy* creates a significant challenge for children in school. The only way to prevent life-threatening food allergies from occurring is to strictly avoid the identified food allergen. The

most common food allergens are:

- Milk
  - Eggs
  - Peanuts
  - Tree nuts (for example, pecans and walnuts)
  - Shellfish
  - Fish
  - Wheat
  - Soy
- ❑ *Insect allergy* poses a risk for anaphylaxis from the sting or bite of bees, hornets, yellow jackets, paper wasps, and fire ants.
  - ❑ *Latex allergy* is a reaction to products such as balloons, gloves, and gym equipment. Two common types of reactions include:
    - *contact dermatitis* (localized allergic reaction to the skin) and
    - *anaphylaxis* depending on the amount of allergen exposure and the degree of sensitivity.

### Action Steps: Symptoms (What to Look for)

Symptoms range from mild to life threatening, and within the first 20 minutes of exposure.

- ❑ Skin
  - Hives, skin rashes, or flushing
  - Itching, tingling, swelling of the lips, mouth, tongue, throat
  - Nasal congestion or itchiness, runny nose, sneezing
  - Itchy, teary, puffy eyes
- ❑ Respiratory
  - Chest tightness, shortness of breath, wheezing, or whistling sound
  - Hoarseness or choking
- ❑ Gastro-intestinal
  - Nausea, vomiting, dry heaves
  - Abdominal cramps or diarrhea
- ❑ Cardiovascular
  - Dizziness, fainting, loss of consciousness
  - Flushed or pale skin
  - Cyanosis (bluish circle around lips and mouth)
- ❑ Mental and psychological
  - Changes in the level of awareness
  - A sense of impending doom, crying, anxiety
  - Denial of symptoms or severity
- ❑ Other symptoms

- Screaming or crying
- Very young children will put their hands in their mouth or pull at their tongues

### Action Steps

- ❑ Notify the school nurse or someone trained to administer *epinephrine*, a lifesaving medication to treat anaphylaxis. Administering epinephrine by injection (always apply to thigh) supplies the person with a dose that will temporarily help. If symptoms persist or are unrelieved, give second dose after 5-10 minutes.
- ❑ Call 9-1-1 in all cases where the reaction appears to be life threatening.
- ❑ Keep the person as awake and alert as possible until emergency medical services personnel arrive.
- ❑ Notify parents or guardians, and the doctor on the person's emergency contact list.

### Preventive or Supportive Actions

- ❑ Avoiding exposure to the allergen is the best way to prevent a reaction. Each school should distinguish between building, classroom, and individual approaches to allergy prevention and management.
- ❑ No student with a diagnosed allergy and known history of

moderate-to-severe reaction should be left in the care of untrained staff during the school day or after-school activities.

- ❑ Establish appropriate cleaning protocols to remove allergens and avoid contaminating cafeteria tables where food-allergic students will eat. Consider a special table or location in the cafeteria for food allergy students to eat together.
- ❑ Establish a school rule to prevent sharing food throughout the school day.
- ❑ Establish a list of school personnel who are properly trained to administer emergency medications according to all applicable state laws and district policy.
- ❑ Encourage parents to list important health conditions on students' emergency form.
- ❑ Encourage employees with health conditions related to allergies to alert the principal or other close work associates of potential problems and remedial actions.

# Food Allergy Assessment Form

2016-2017

		<b>Today's date</b>	____/____/____ DD MM YYYY
<b>Student's name</b>		<b>Grade</b>	
<b>Parent or guardian</b>		<b>Phone</b>	(____)____-____ ____
<b>Healthcare provider who treats the allergy</b>		<b>Phone</b>	(____)____-____ ____

**Do you think your child's food allergy may be life-threatening?**

- Yes. See the school nurse as soon as possible.
- No

**Did your student's health care provider tell you the food allergy may be life-threatening?**

- Yes. See the school nurse as soon as possible.
- No

## Tell us about your child's history and current status

**Which foods have caused an allergic reaction?**

*Check all that apply.*

- Peanuts
- Fish or shellfish
- Eggs
- Peanut butter or nut butter
- Peanut oil or nut oil
- Soy products
- Milk
- Tree nuts (walnuts, almonds, pecans, etc.)
- Others: \_\_\_\_\_

**How many times has your child had a reaction?**

*Check all that apply.*

- Never
- Once
- More than once. Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

**When was the last reaction?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Are the reactions ...**

- Staying the same
- Getting worse
- Getting better

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## Tell us about any triggers and symptoms

What has to happen for your child to react to the problem foods? *Check all that apply.*

- Eating foods
- Touching foods
- Smelling foods
- Other. Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

What are the signs and symptoms of your child's allergic reaction? Be specific; include things your child might say.

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How quickly do the signs and symptoms appear after exposure to the food?

- Seconds
- Minutes
- Hours
- Days

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## Tell us about treatment

Has your child ever needed treatment at a clinic or the hospital for an allergic reaction?

- Yes. Explain: \_\_\_\_\_
- No

Does your child understand how to avoid foods that cause allergic reactions?

- Yes
- No

What treatment or medication has your health care provider recommended for use in an allergic reaction?

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Have you used the treatment?

- Yes
- No

**Does your child know how to use the treatment?**

- Yes
- No

**Describe any side effects or problems your child had in using the suggested treatment:**

**If you intend for your child to eat school-provided meals, have you filled out a diet order form for school?**

- Yes
- No. I need to get the form, have it filled out by our healthcare provider, and return it to school.

**If medication is to be available at school, have you filled out a medication form for school?**

- Yes
- No. I need to get the form, have it filled out by our healthcare provider, and return it to school.

**If medication is needed at school, have you brought the medication or treatment supplies to school?**

- Yes
- No. I need to get the medication or treatment and bring it to school.

**What do you want us to do at school to help your child avoid problem foods?**

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## I agree that you can share information

**I give consent to share, with the classroom, that my child has a life-threatening food allergy.**

- Yes
- No

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or guardian signature                      date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewed by R.N.                                      date

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B.: \_\_\_\_\_

Allergy to: \_\_\_\_\_

Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ lbs.

**Asthma:** [ ] Yes (higher risk for a severe reaction) [ ] No

**For a suspected or active food allergy reaction:**

**PLACE  
STUDENT'S  
PICTURE  
HERE**

FOR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING

## SEVERE SYMPTOMS

[ ] If checked, give epinephrine immediately if the allergen was definitely eaten, even if there are no symptoms.

			
<b>LUNG</b>	<b>HEART</b>	<b>THROAT</b>	<b>MOUTH</b>
Short of breath, wheezing, repetitive cough	Pale, blue, faint, weak pulse, dizzy	Tight, hoarse, trouble breathing/ swallowing	Significant swelling of the tongue and/or lips
			<b>OR A COMBINATION</b> of mild or severe symptoms from different body areas.
<b>SKIN</b>	<b>GUT</b>	<b>OTHER</b>	
Many hives over body, widespread redness	Repetitive vomiting or severe diarrhea	Feeling something bad is about to happen, anxiety, confusion	

**NOTE:** Do not depend on antihistamines or inhalers (bronchodilators) to treat a severe reaction. **Use Epinephrine.**

- ↓ ↓ ↓
1. **INJECT EPINEPHRINE IMMEDIATELY.**
  2. **Call 911.** Request ambulance with epinephrine.
    - Consider giving additional medications (following or with the epinephrine):
      - » Antihistamine
      - » Inhaler (bronchodilator) if asthma
    - Lay the student flat and raise legs. If breathing is difficult or they are vomiting, let them sit up or lie on their side.
    - If symptoms do not improve, or symptoms return, more doses of epinephrine can be given about 5 minutes or more after the last dose.
    - Alert emergency contacts.
    - Transport student to ER even if symptoms resolve. Student should remain in ER for 4+ hours because symptoms may return.

**NOTE: WHEN IN DOUBT, GIVE EPINEPHRINE.**

## MILD SYMPTOMS

[ ] If checked, give epinephrine immediately for ANY symptoms if the allergen was likely eaten.

	
<b>NOSE</b>	<b>MOUTH</b>
Itchy/runny nose, sneezing	Itchy mouth
	
<b>SKIN</b>	<b>GUT</b>
A few hives, mild itch	Mild nausea/discomfort

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1. **GIVE ANTIHISTAMINES, IF ORDERED BY PHYSICIAN**
2. Stay with student; alert emergency contacts.
3. Watch student closely for changes. If symptoms worsen, **GIVE EPINEPHRINE.**

## MEDICATIONS/DOSES

Epinephrine Brand: \_\_\_\_\_

Epinephrine Dose: [ ] 0.15 mg IM [ ] 0.3 mg IM

Antihistamine Brand or Generic: \_\_\_\_\_

Antihistamine Dose: \_\_\_\_\_

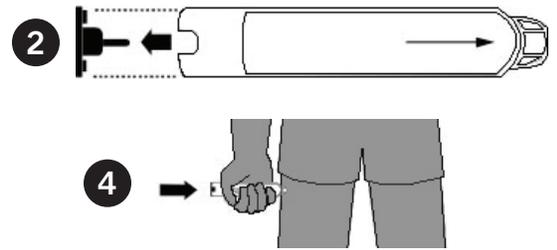
Other (e.g., inhaler-bronchodilator if asthmatic): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PARENT/GUARDIAN AUTHORIZATION SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_ PHYSICIAN/HCP AUTHORIZATION SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

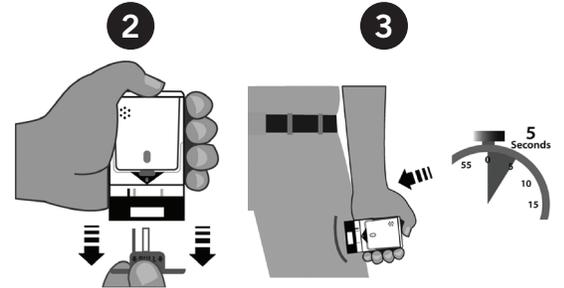
## EPIPEN® (EPINEPHRINE) AUTO-INJECTOR DIRECTIONS

1. Remove the EpiPen Auto-Injector from the plastic carrying case.
2. Pull off the blue safety release cap.
3. Swing and firmly push orange tip against mid-outer thigh.
4. Hold for approximately 10 seconds.
5. Remove and massage the area for 10 seconds.



## AUVI-Q™ (EPINEPHRINE INJECTION, USP) DIRECTIONS

1. Remove the outer case of Auvi-Q. This will automatically activate the voice instructions.
2. Pull off red safety guard.
3. Place black end against mid-outer thigh.
4. Press firmly and hold for 5 seconds.
5. Remove from thigh.



## ADRENACLICK®/ADRENACLICK® GENERIC DIRECTIONS

1. Remove the outer case.
2. Remove grey caps labeled "1" and "2".
3. Place red rounded tip against mid-outer thigh.
4. Press down hard until needle penetrates.
5. Hold for 10 seconds. Remove from thigh.



## OTHER DIRECTIONS/INFORMATION (may self-carry epinephrine, may self-administer epinephrine, etc.):

Treat student before calling Emergency Contacts. The first signs of a reaction can be mild, but symptoms can get worse quickly.

### EMERGENCY CONTACTS — CALL 911

RESCUE SQUAD: \_\_\_\_\_

DOCTOR: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT/GUARDIAN: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

### OTHER EMERGENCY CONTACTS

NAME/RELATIONSHIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME/RELATIONSHIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT/GUARDIAN AUTHORIZATION SIGNATURE

DATE

## Blood-borne Diseases

### Situation Description

Blood and certain body fluids infected with micro-organisms, known as pathogens, can cause infectious diseases, including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and the hepatitis B and C viruses.

### Threats

Contact with infected blood and certain body fluids pose a risk of infection, when blood-borne viruses enter the body. This may be through:

- ❑ Puncturing the skin with a sharp object contaminated with infected blood or body fluids
- ❑ Splashing infected fluids into mucous membranes (the tissue lining of the eyes, nose or mouth), or onto broken skin (for example, open cuts, nicks, wounds or skin abrasions)

### Action Steps

If exposure to infected or potentially infected blood or body fluids is suspected:

- ❑ Seek first aid immediately:
  - If mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, or mouth are affected, flush with copious amounts of clean water at a

sink or eyewash station for 20 minutes.

- If there is a sharp object injury, allow the wound to bleed freely. Then wash the area thoroughly with non-abrasive soap and water.
- If an area of broken skin is affected, wash the area thoroughly with non-abrasive soap and water.
- ❑ Report the incident to appropriate personnel in your employer's exposure control plan.
- ❑ Seek medical attention immediately. Immunizations or medications may be necessary to prevent the infection or alter the course of the disease.

### Preventive or Supportive Actions

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires employers to have an Exposure Control Plan, a written program outlining the protective measures that the employer will take to eliminate or minimize employee exposure incidents.

The Exposure Control Plan guidelines should be made available

to employees and must specifically explain steps to prevent the spread

of infectious diseases.



## Infectious Diseases

### Situation Description

A condition in which pathogens – viruses, bacteria, fungi, or parasites – enter the body and cause a state of disease.

Infections damage cells of the body by adhering to and damaging the cell walls, releasing toxic substances or causing allergic reactions.

### Threats

Exposure to a variety of infectious diseases in a school population is not unexpected and is almost inevitable. Almost all infections that humans contract are passed along to other humans.

In any school population, some people may have a higher risk of complications if they are exposed to specific infectious diseases, including people with immune deficiencies, anemia, or chronic disease and those who are pregnant.

- ❑ *MRSA* (Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*) bacterium is spread by direct skin-to-skin contact, and is hard to diagnose because it is similar to other skin infections. It is an antibiotic-resistant staph infection that requires an early and accurate diagnosis.
- ❑ *Meningitis* is a serious infectious disease that can affect anyone at any time. In the early stages, its signs and symptoms are similar to many common illnesses. The germs causing bacterial meningitis are not passed easily from person to person, so cases are often isolated.
- ❑ However, local public health officials will provide guidance on how to treat others identified as close contacts to reduce the risk of further cases.
  - *Viral meningitis* is rarely life threatening, but it can make people very sick. While most people fully recover, some can be left with after-effects.
  - *Bacterial meningitis* can be life-threatening and requires immediate medical attention. *Meningococcus* is the most common cause of bacterial meningitis. It can also cause *septicemia* (blood poisoning), which is generally more life-threatening than meningitis.
- ❑ *Skin rashes* can occur from a variety of factors, including infections, heat, and allergens. Viral skin infections are common

among athletes through skin-to-skin contact or touching saliva.

- ❑ *West Nile virus* infection occurs when the virus is transmitted to humans, primarily by bites from mosquitoes. It often does not present symptoms or will result in a fever with symptoms similar to the flu.

### Common Indicators of Infectious Diseases (What to Look for)

Classroom teachers and teacher aides spend much time with students, and are therefore often able to detect early physical and behavioral changes in students who are ill.

School staff may observe differences in the usual pattern of a particular student that may be “indicators” to suggest the presence of an infection, including:

- ❑ **Appetite:** A student who is ill or is becoming ill will exhibit changes in eating habits.
- ❑ **Behavior:** Irritability may be associated with illnesses, often due to accompanying fatigue, fever, and discomfort.
- ❑ **Fever** is a concern when it is detected over 100.4°.
- ❑ **Skin color** that is a change from a student’s normal skin color, including a pasty, pale appearance, may signal an

illness. This also includes a flushed appearance with rosy cheeks and glassy or red eyes.

- ❑ **Rash** may be a symptom of a serious or non-serious condition. Rashes can have an infectious or a non-infectious cause.
- ❑ **Change in bowel habit**, specifically diarrhea. Vomiting and diarrhea may signal an advanced illness or infectious disease, requiring notifying the parent to have the child go home for further observation.
- ❑ **Nasal discharge** and obstruction may signal a cold or an allergic reaction. Breathing may be noisy if nasal passages are obstructed. If breathing is labored, seek immediate medical care.
- ❑ **Sore throat, cough, and earache** are all general signs of an infection.

### Action Steps

- ❑ Frequent hand washing is the single most important practice to prevent transmitting disease. Proper hand washing requires using soap, and vigorously washing under a stream of warm, running water. Dry with a single-use disposable towel.

#### Note

Hand sanitizers are not as effective as washing, and caution is recommended to avoid accidental ingestion or abuse of hand sanitizers by students.

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- ❑ Staff should wear gloves when tending to students who exhibit signs of illness or infection.
  - ❑ Any student or staff member who exhibits fever, headache, nausea, or vomiting should seek medical attention. If someone is ill or deteriorating rapidly, seek urgent medical care.
  - ❑ Prompt identification is important to control infectious diseases. Notify local public health officials of suspected or confirmed disease cases or outbreaks. Public health – local or state – is the primary resource in identifying and controlling infectious disease in a community.
- ❑ Consult and cooperate with local public health officials about response protocols to infectious diseases.
  - ❑ Implement disinfection teams to clean and disinfect commonly used areas or frequently touched surfaces.
  - ❑ The decision to close a school for any communicable disease should be made by school officials in consultation with local and state public health officials. However, in most cases, it is unnecessary to close schools to disinfect them when MRSA infections occur.

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## Comparison: Seasonal and Pandemic Flu

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Seasonal Flu	Pandemic Flu
Outbreaks follow predictable seasonal patterns. Occurs annually, usually in winter, in temperate climates.	Occurs rarely (Three times in the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century, last in 1968).
Usually some immunity built up from previous exposure.	No previous exposure; little or no pre-existing immunity.
Healthy adults usually not at-risk for serious complications. (The very young, elderly, and those with certain underlying health conditions are at increased risk for serious complications.)	Healthy people may be at increased risk for serious complications.
Health systems can usually meet public and patient needs.	Health systems may be overwhelmed.
Vaccine developed based on known virus strains and available for annual flu season.	Vaccine probably would not be available in the early stages of a pandemic.
Adequate supplies of antivirals are usually available.	Effective antivirals may be in limited supply.
Average U.S. deaths are approximately 36,000 a year.	Number of deaths could be quite high (for example, in 1918, the U.S. death toll was approximately 500,000).
Symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose, and muscle pain. Deaths often caused by complications, such as pneumonia.	Symptoms may be more severe and complications more frequent.
Generally causes modest impact on society (for example, some school closings, people who are sick are encouraged to stay home).	May cause major impact on society (for example, widespread restrictions on travel, closings of schools and businesses, cancellation of large public gatherings).
Manageable impact on domestic and world economy.	Potential for severe impact on domestic and world economy.



## Medical Emergency, Including Life-threatening Incidents

### Situation Description

Medical emergency incidents in schools may result from injuries, complications of chronic health conditions, or unexpected illnesses. These situations can be either anticipated risks related to an individual student’s medical condition or unanticipated events that occur in an otherwise healthy student or staff member.

Develop response protocols for the following categories of medical emergencies:

<p><b>Life Threatening:</b></p>	<p>A condition that can cause death or disability within minutes requires immediate intervention, medical care, and hospitalization.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> cardiac arrest, airway and breathing difficulties, chest pain.</p>
<p><b>Serious or Potential Life Threatening:</b></p>	<p>Situations that may result in life-threatening or may produce permanent damage require immediate treatment.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> burns, major fractures, diabetic or related seizure, insect bites, or food allergy.</p>

<p><b>Non-Life-Threatening</b></p>	<p>An injury or illness that may affect a person’s general health, which may include mild or moderate fever, stomach ache, seizures, fractures, or cuts.</p>
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### Threats

It is estimated that 10% to 25% of injuries to children occur while they are in school. In addition to injury-related emergencies, other medical incidents such as asthma, diabetic and epileptic seizures, or sudden cardiac arrests can occur in both students and staff at school.

The prevalence of school children with special health care needs and chronic medical conditions requires personnel to be better prepared and trained to manage these potential life-threatening emergencies.

### Action Steps: Life-threatening or Serious Medical Emergency

When an injury, illness, or condition is determined to be potentially life-threatening or disabling:

- Call 9-1-1 immediately.
- Provide first aid or Basic Life Support (for example, CPR, rescue breathing, use of AED).

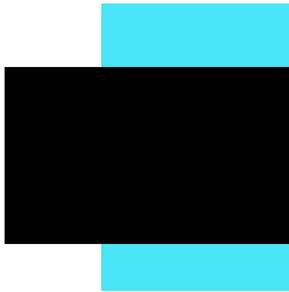
- *Asthmatic*: Administer rescue inhaler. Keep the victim calm and encourage slow, deep breathing. Call 9-1-1 if the victim's condition does not improve or rescue medicine has little or no affect.
- *Seizure*: Do not try to move the victim, stop the seizure, or place anything in the victim's mouth. Keep the victim calm and comfortable until EMS arrives.
- *Diabetic*: Place the victim on his or her side or in an upright position if restless or uncooperative or is unable to swallow. If the victim becomes alert and is able to swallow, give sips of regular soda (not diet soda) until EMS arrives.
- ❑ Contact the school nurse.
- ❑ Clear the area of all students and non-staff personnel.
- ❑ DO NOT move the victim unless the person is in immediate danger of further injury.
- ❑ Enlist a member of the school's Emergency Response Team to meet the emergency responders when they arrive and to provide updates on the situation.
- ❑ Notify the parent or guardian of the student, or the emergency contact for faculty or staff member. Provide information about the incident and where the

person is being transported if known when you call.

**Action Steps: Non-Life-Threatening**

When an injury, illness, or condition is determined to be non-life-threatening:

- ❑ Notify the school nurse or principal's office.
- ❑ Do not move the victim unless the person is in immediate danger of further injury.
- ❑ Administer first aid procedures as indicated by the nature of the injury or illness. Consider transporting the victim to an advanced medical care facility if condition warrants.
- ❑ Clear the area of all students and non-staff personnel.
- ❑ Notify the parent or guardian of the student or the emergency contact for faculty or staff member. Provide information about the incident.



## Technological Threats and Hazards

Technological hazards result from accidents or failures of systems and structures, such as:

- Hazardous material spills
- Nuclear power plant or electrical failures
- Fire
- Train derailments

Often, these incidents have little or no warning before they occur.

Technological hazards and threats are becoming more commonplace due to the ever-increasing advances and dependencies on technology.

## Airplane Crash



Schools in proximity to airports, including along takeoff and landing flight paths, are at a risk for the unfortunate event of an aircraft accident or incident.

### Threats

The aircraft crash site is a dangerous environment. Obvious concerns are a large fuel fire, debris field, and injured and deceased passengers or people on the ground.

When responding to a high-impact accident, be prepared for a horrific accident scene.

### Action Steps

If an aircraft accident occurs, the response should follow similar protocols for high-profile events:

- ❑ Call 6361 immediately. The caller should remain on the line to provide updates until EMS arrives. Provide clear and concise information about the:
  - Nature of the emergency
  - Description of incident (if known)
  - Area of school where incident is located
  - Number of people who may be injured

- ❑ The DERT shall provide instruction regarding any plans of action.

### Note

A minimum of 400 yards is recommended as a precaution from possible explosions.

- ❑ As best as possible, care for any injured students and staff until advanced care by trained personnel can be provided. In this situation, removing the injured to a safe distance from the crash scene may be necessary to prevent further injury or harm.
- ❑ If the danger of fire is likely, shut off the natural gas or oil fuel and possibly the electricity.

### If an aircraft crashes near the school, but does not damage the building:

- ❑ Call 6361 immediately to report the incident and related information.
- ❑ Start school safe condition or response protocol, such as lockdown or evacuation depending on the school's proximity to the crash site.
- ❑ Follow the direction of EMS or law enforcement personnel responding to the site.



## Building Collapse



### Situation Description

A school building collapse may occur as the result of a structural failure caused by construction activity, earthquake, explosion, or natural forces such as weather.

- ❑ Once outside, call 9-1-1 immediately.
- ❑ The administrator in charge shall contact the Office of the Superintendent

### Threats

A catastrophic failure of a structure for whatever reason will likely result in significant injuries and death of students, staff, and other building occupants.

- ❑ People who are unable to exit the building due to damage should try to go to an undamaged room if possible, and open or break a window and signal for help.
- ❑ People who are trapped in the building should call 9-1-1 if possible to alert responders of the incident and their location.

### Action Steps

- ❑ If a roof, ceiling, or wall collapses, people inside should drop, cover, and hold. Seek shelter under sturdy desks and tables and move away from windows or glass.
- ❑ **EVACUATE** - People who are capable of evacuating a building should do so as quickly as possible; do not try to take any personal effects or other items.

#### Note

If trapped by debris, make as much noise as possible, so that emergency personnel can locate people inside.

#### Note

Exit through stairwells only. Consider an alternate exit route if the building damage blocks the exit path.

- ❑ People outside the building should not try to enter the building. **Relocate a safe distance from the building. Do not leave the area until instructed** to do so by emergency personnel.
- ❑ Assist disabled people or others who may need assistance;

provide first aid or Basic Life Support depending on the nature of the injuries.

- ❑ Emergency response will focus on assisting survivors, extinguishing fires, shutting off utilities, assessing structural instabilities, and creating safe paths out of the compromised structure.



## Business Interruption

### Situation Description

Planning for continued operation of the school district in the face of a catastrophic incident will help to ensure that the system continue to operate. Developing a plan outlines the important tasks for employees to carry out and remain in contact with parents, vendors, and employees.

### Threats

Loss of critical functions caused by fire, explosion, natural disasters, workplace fatalities, cyber-terrorism, and other serious incidents can disrupt the business function of school systems. Continuity is key.

### Action Steps

- ❑ Act under discretion of DERT who will:
  - Ensure that time-sensitive critical services and functions are in order and back up and running
  - Procedures for restoring operations, including personnel and back-ups
  - Recovery elements that prioritize business operations and a logical schedule for

bringing people, functions and facilities back on line.

- Deploy additional district/community resources.
- ❑ Inventory the physical assets needed to continue critical operations, even at vastly reduced levels. Update these databases or spreadsheets during the annual audit or property insurance renewal process, but record major acquisitions as they occur.

## Fire, Arson, and Explosion



### Situation Description

A fire or explosion in a school, while rare, presents an immediate threat to students, staff, and other building occupants.

**Threats** Major causes of school fires include improper handling and storage of flammable liquids, overloaded electrical outlets, and natural causes like lightning strikes.

### Action Steps

- ❑ EVACUATE- Activate the fire alarm. All fire emergencies require full evacuation. Close classroom and hallway doors to prevent air movement and spread of smoke.
- ❑ Call 9-1-1 immediately. The caller should remain on the line to provide updates until EMS arrives. Provide clear and concise information about the:
  - Nature of the emergency
  - Description of incident (if known)
  - Area of school where incident is located

- Number of students and staff who may be injured
- ❑ Help disabled people or others who may need assistance. Provide first aid or Basic Life Support depending on the nature of the injuries.
- ❑ Direct custodial personnel to shut off the HVAC or air-handler system to prevent smoke distribution, and all gas and fuel lines, if possible.
- ❑ Small fires that can be safely contained by using fire extinguishers should be attacked **ONLY IF** doing so does not put the person or anyone else in danger. **DO NOT FIGHT** the fire if it is spreading rapidly or blocking an exit.

### NSPRA Tip

When using a fire extinguisher, remember the acronym PASS:

1. **P**ull the pin.
2. **A**im the nozzle at the base of the fire.
3. **S**queeze the handle.
4. **S**weep in a spraying motion from side to side at the base of the fire.

## Gas Leak and Noxious Odor



### Situation Description

A natural gas leak or noxious odor may indicate a serious and potentially explosive situation.

Natural gas can be explosive as well as flammable.

### Threats

Natural gas is normally odorless. The gas company injects a chemical into natural gas to provide a distinctive sour egg odor. Natural gas rises and will often be outside because most gas lines are outside the building.

### Action Steps: Gas Leak

- ❑ Activate the fire alarm and start an immediate EVACUATION to a safe location as far away from the building as possible.

*Note:* Evacuate in an orderly fashion, but do not delay.

- ❑ Close all classroom and interior doors to help contain the spread of the natural gas, or fire should the gas ignite.
- ❑ Evacuate the building BEFORE calling 9-1-1. The caller should remain on the line to provide updates until EMS arrives.

Provide clear and concise information about the nature of the emergency, description of incident, and location of the gas leak (if known), and the school's response.

- ❑ Do not try to investigate the source of the gas leak. **However, if possible, direct the custodian to shut off any gas and fuel intake systems.**
- ❑ Contact the Office of the Superintendent who may deploy DERT, including mobilizing school buses (for evacuation purposes), preparing a parent reunification site, and activating the Standard Response Protocol (for example, parent, staff, and media notification protocols).

### Action Steps: Noxious Odor

- ❑ If unsure of the nature of the noxious odor, evacuate and isolate the area. This may require moving students and staff to another part of the building, or to EVACUATE to a safe location outside of the facility.
- ❑ To isolate the area where the noxious odors are identified, lock the doors and post monitors to keep people out of the area.

- ❑ Contact the Office of the Superintendent who will contact UISD Environmental and Energy Department (956) 473-7930.

## Hazardous Materials from Inside the School, Including Science Lab or Custodial Spill

### Situation Description

A chemical emergency occurs when a hazardous chemical used in science labs, art room, storage rooms and custodial closets is accidentally spilled, or released, and the release has the potential to harm people's health.

### Threats

Schools are required to provide a place of employment that is free from chemical exposures that are likely to harm employees' health, and must comply with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

### Action Steps

- ❑ Treat all chemical spills as DANGEROUS. Immediately consult the proper *Safety Data Sheet* for appropriate response and notify your campus/department SSCO.
- ❑ If anyone is injured, loses consciousness, or experiences labored breathing as a result of the chemical spill or release, call 9-1-1 and safely evacuate yourself, the injured, and students. The caller should remain on the line to provide updates until EMS arrives.
- ❑ Provide clear and concise information about the nature of the emergency, description of incident (if known), area of school where incident is located, number of students and staff who may be injured or experiencing symptoms associated with exposure to the chemical.
- ❑ If a chemical comes in contact with the eyes, victims should immediately flush their eyes at an eye wash station or under a steady stream of water for at least 15 minutes. Eyelids may have to be forcibly kept open to ensure effective washing. Seek further medical care.
- ❑ Anyone exposed to a large amount of chemical spilled or splashed onto the skin or clothing should be immersed in the safety shower to allow for a continuous stream of water. Remove clothing, including shoes and jewelry, while under the running water. Seek further medical care.
- ❑ Start a school safe condition or response protocol, such as evacuation depending on the nature of the chemical spill or release. In all cases, if a fire erupts, activate the fire alarm. Start regular fire drill procedures

for evacuation. Close classroom and hallway doors to prevent air movement and spread of smoke.

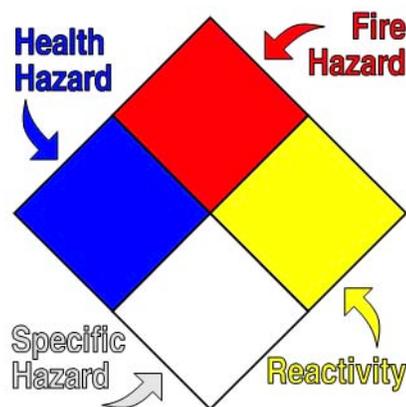
- ❑ Small fires that can be safely contained by using fire extinguishers should be attacked ONLY IF doing so does not put the person or anyone else in danger. DO NOT FIGHT the fire if it is spreading rapidly or blocking an exit.

Definition of Surveillance Levels		
<b>Corrosives</b>	Substances that cause visible destruction or permanent changes of the skin tissue on contact. Corrosives are especially dangerous to the eyes and respiratory tract.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— If eyes are affected, wash them for 15 to 20 minutes. Eyelids must be open.</li> <li>— Do not rub the injured area.</li> </ul>
<b>Flammables</b>	Liquids with a flash point below 100° F and gases that burn readily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Evacuate area immediately.</li> <li>— Turn off the main electricity and gas valves.</li> </ul>
<b>Toxics</b>	Poisonous substances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Wash hands with soap and water.</li> <li>— Discard contaminated clothing or objects.</li> <li>— Use appropriate antidotes.</li> </ul>
<b>Reactives</b>	Substances that can undergo a chemical or other change that may result in an explosion, burning, and corrosive or toxic condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Close all doors.</li> <li>— Evacuate the danger area immediately.</li> <li>— Follow decontamination instructions from local fire or health officials. Depending on the chemical, people exposed may be advised to take a shower or to stay away from water and follow another procedure.</li> </ul>

### Chemical Classification and Safety Signs

The National Fire Protection Association uses a symbol system designed as a diamond-shaped label containing 4 colored squares. A number, 0 – 4, or an abbreviation is added to each square indicating the order of hazard severity. The higher the number, the greater the hazard.

- Red** Flammability (measures how easily material will ignite, how quickly fire will spread)
- Yellow** Reactivity (explosive materials)
- Blue** Health hazard (carcinogens, mutagens and teratogens)
- White** Specific hazard (corrosive materials)





## Hazardous Materials from Outside the School, Including Chemical Emergencies

### Situation Description

A chemical emergency occurs when a hazardous chemical has been released, and the release has the potential to harm people's health.

Chemical releases result from an industrial accident or a terrorist attack. Scientists categorize hazardous chemicals by the type of chemical or by the effects it might have on people exposed to it, including biotoxins, acids, lung or pulmonary or nerve agents, and solvents.

### Threats

Thousands of schools are located within a "vulnerability zone," areas defined by companies that make or store toxic chemicals that pose a risk if the facility experiences a catastrophic accident, leak, or explosion. The facilities range from fertilizer-processing and water-treatment plants to power-generating stations and chemical-storage sites.

Short-term chemical releases to the atmosphere will often dissipate quickly, and seeking shelter inside buildings could minimize the risk of exposure.

Hazardous chemicals may also be spilled as a result of railway derailments or vehicle accidents or as an act of terrorism.

### Action Steps

Hazardous material spills or release may cause the short- or long-term evacuation of an affected area. Depending on the nature of the chemical, its release into the atmosphere, and local weather, conditions will dictate whether schools should be evacuated or closed until cleanup is completed.

- ❑ Call 9-1-1 if a student, staff member, or person near the school reports the incident, or if the incident occurs near the school facility.
- ❑ Start a school safe condition or response protocol, such as Shelter-in-Place depending on the nature of the chemical spill or release. People outside should immediately return to the school, or move upstream, uphill, and upwind if getting into the school is delayed.

**Note**

Hazardous materials can be transported quickly by air and water. Move students and staff away from the immediate vicinity of danger.

- ❑ If people have been exposed to radioactive material, they should decontaminate themselves. Remove and bag all clothing, and shower thoroughly with soap and water. Seek medical attention after emergency officials indicate it is safe to leave the shelter.

**Note**

Removing a contaminated person's clothing effectively removes more than 80% of contaminants.

- ❑ Shut off all HVAC or air-handler systems. Close all windows and doors; seal gaps under doorways and windows with wet towels and duct tape or similar thick tape.
- ❑ Follow the instructions of local emergency coordinators (for example, law enforcement, fire, etc.) as they often have most current information on incident. Be prepared to evacuate to an emergency shelter if directed.
- ❑ Help anyone who may need assistance; provide first aid or Basic Life Support depending on the nature of the injuries.

- ❑ Remain in protected interior areas of the building where toxic vapors are reduced, and keep an emergency radio with the Building Emergency Response Team to monitor the situation. Wait for instructions from local emergency coordinators.
- ❑ Heed the advice of local emergency or health coordinators.

Impacts: School and District



## Power Failure, Including Utility and Water Outage



### Situation Description

Power outages can occur without warning and may last a few minutes (*minor*) to days (*major*) depending on the source or cause.

The power outage may be localized to 1 or 2 schools or over large areas of a school district.

### Threats

Power outages or loss of water may be more inconvenient, but it can pose serious threats to safety if not addressed appropriately. The longer the duration of a power failure or loss of water, the greater the impact it will have on a school's daily operation.

### Action Steps

- ❑ Turn off all light switches and set all equipment and appliance switches to the OFF position.

#### Note

This is to protect against kicking out the circuit breakers, blowing fuses, or damaging equipment when the full surge or current hits as the power comes back on.

- ❑ Remain in the classroom and wait for instructions. Increase ventilation by opening windows.
- ❑ Consider moving students and staff from darkened areas (for example, restroom, stairwells, or other areas with no windows) to areas with natural lighting. Help disabled people or students who become frightened by the sudden darkness.
- ❑ Report if anyone is trapped in elevators.
- ❑ Contact the district's facilities or buildings and grounds department to respond to the site and recommend a course of action. Notify utility company if appropriate.
- ❑ Teachers should be prepared to cope with short-term power failure with the regular curriculum or substitute classroom activities.
- ❑ Provisions may need to be made to provide food and water if the power failure affects the ability of the school to provide regular breakfast or lunch menus.

- ❑ Depending on the length of the power failure, consider canceling school.

## Radiological Release from Nuclear Power Plant or Terrorist Attack

### Situation Description

Radiation emergencies may be unintentional (such as a nuclear power plant accident), or intentional, such as a radiological dispersal device (RDD), sometimes called a *dirty bomb*.

### Threats

A nuclear emergency involves exploding a nuclear weapon or improvised nuclear device that produces an intense pulse of heat, light, air pressure, and radiation.

Nuclear explosions produce fallout (radioactive materials) that can be carried long distances by the wind. Radiation can affect the body in a number of ways, and the adverse health effects of exposure may not be apparent for years.

### Action Steps

If a nuclear power plant accident occurs, local authorities will activate warning sirens or an alert, followed by instructions through the Emergency Alert System on local radio and TV on how to respond.

- ❑ Start a school safe condition or response protocol that resembles a shelter-in-place. People outside

should immediately seek shelter indoors.

- ❑ Move occupants to the middle of the building or basement, away from doors and windows. Place as much distance and dense shielding as possible between occupants and the outdoors.
- ❑ Anyone who may have been exposed to radioactive material should decontaminate. Remove and bag all clothing, and shower thoroughly with soap and water. Seek medical attention after emergency officials indicate it is safe to leave the shelter.

**Shut off all HVAC or air-handler systems. Close all windows and doors; seal gaps under doorways and windows with wet towels and duct tape or similar thick tape.**

- ❑ Emergency management officials are trained to respond to disaster situations and will provide specific actions to keep people safe. Use radios, televisions, computers, or mobile devices to obtain any information on the situation.

## Train Derailment, Including Tanker Truck Accident

### Situation Description

The possibility of a train derailment – especially those transporting hazardous materials, including chemicals, crude oil and fuel – is a major concern to any community with a railway system or lines running through it.

### Threats

While the frequency of train derailments is very low, the risk is significant and the hazards associated with a derailment are far reaching.

Railroads have long carried hazardous materials through urban and rural areas, but the latest safety threat is a fiftyfold increase in crude shipments. Railroads carried some 500,000 carloads of crude in 2014, up from 9,500 in 2008.

Schools within a ½-mile to 1 mile of oil train routes face the greatest risk of a train accident because these distances encompass the potential evacuation and impact zones.

### Action Steps

- ❑ Call 6361. The caller should remain on the line to provide updates until emergency responders arrive. Provide clear and concise information about the nature of the emergency, description of incident (if known), proximity of the incident to the school.
- ❑ Start a school safe condition or response protocol, such as evacuation or shelter-in-place, depending on the nature of the train cargo spill or release. If a Shelter-in-Place is initiated – likely due to the cargo being a hazardous chemical – it is important to shut off all HVAC/air- handler systems. Close all windows and doors; seal gaps under doorways and windows with wet towels and duct tape or similar thick tape.
- ❑ In many cases, local emergency officials will order an evacuation if one has not already taken place. Close classroom and hallway doors to prevent air movement and spread of smoke into the building.
- ❑ Contact the superintendent and communication offices to start

district emergency response support, including mobilizing school buses (for evacuation purposes), preparing a parent reunification site, and activating the Crisis Communications Plan (for example, parent, staff, and media notification protocols).

- ❑ Emergency management officials are trained to respond to disaster situations and will provide specific actions to keep people safe. Use radios, televisions, computers, or mobile devices to obtain any information on the situation.

# Death in the School Community

## Death of a Student/Staff Member

- Overview
- Dealing with a Death in the School Family
- Crisis Intervention Team
- Checklist for the Crisis Intervention Team
- Checklist for a Death in the School Community

### Overview

The death of a young person is always shocking and usually unexpected. It has a great impact on the person's friends and peers, to say nothing of family members.

Schools play an important role in helping students and staff adjust to the death of one of the members of their "school family." This section provides recommendations to follow if a death occurs in the school family, whether it is a student or a staff member.

National statistics show that approximately 1 out of every 2,000 students dies or is killed each year,

with the incidence of death being the highest among high school students. The most frequent causes of student deaths are accidents, homicide, and suicides, followed by illness or disease.

Unfortunately, at some time, all educators will deal with the death of a student or colleague. It is essential to be prepared – in advance – so that the response is timely and supportive of students and staff, and leads to a constructive resolution.

This section also defines the role and function of a district crisis team in helping people cope with the death of a school family member.

The extent to which a death in the school family causes a crisis in the school or district depends on the circumstances of that death. The procedures that follow may be far more than necessary in some cases, but very pertinent and useful in other.

## Dealing with a Death in the School Family

### Immediate Action Steps

- If a death occurs in school or on campus, notify authorities. Call 9-1-1.
- Verify the information about the incident.
- Notify key school and district staff, including superintendent and communication office, security office, and the district's Crisis Intervention Team coordinator to activate the team.
- Remove the student's or staff member's personal items from lockers, desk, etc.

- Stop all disciplinary, testing, or special placement notifications that may inadvertently be sent to the family.

### Contact the Family

- The principal should contact the family of the deceased and offer support.
- Obtain information about funeral arrangements, flowers, and home visits.
- Verify the names of surviving siblings (and cousins) and notify their schools.

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## School Action Plan

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### Announce the Loss

- Using the phone tree/call Dept. Chairs/team leaders or staff electronic or rapid notification system, notify all staff members. (Make every attempt to ensure that ALL staff are aware of the person's death (before they return to school.)
- Hold a full staff meeting before school starts.
  - Give staff recommendations for dealing with a loss in the classroom.
  - Review the procedures for referring students to counseling.
  - Provide a statement to read in an extended homeroom period.
  - Arrange for substitutes for any teachers who feel they cannot go directly to class.
  - Check the emotional needs of support staff and other adults in the school.
- Meet with student government officers to discuss ways that these student leaders can help share information, monitor other students' grief, etc.
- Throughout the day, if new and pertinent information becomes available, update staff and students with printed messages.
- Debrief the staff at the end of the day. Give staff an opportunity to express their feelings and offer suggestions.
- Identify students who may be at risk and assign counselors to call their parents.

## Responsibilities

### Staff

- Identify students who were close friends of the deceased. Don't forget students in clubs, in activity groups, or on the same team.
- Identify students who are in distress and talk with them. Have another student escort them to a group or individual counseling activity.
- Shorten and structure assignments. Postpone and reschedule tests, if necessary.
- Give students an opportunity to discuss the loss, grieve, talk, and vent together.
- Acknowledge emotions through discussion and involvement in constructive activities in the classroom.
- Discuss funeral arrangements to prepare students who will attend services.
- Plan whether students who wish to attend the funeral or memorial service will be taken by school buses or by parents.

### Counselors

- Work with the district's Crisis Intervention Team, if one is available. (Remember, the crisis team plays a supportive role and may need help to avoid burnout.)
- Provide small- and large-group areas and individual locations to talk with counselors.
- Cancel appointments and meetings that are not emergencies.
- Request additional secretarial or volunteer help to answer phones.
- Keep a list of students who are counseled. Make follow-up calls to students in distress or to their parents.

### Administrators

- Update all staff as new information becomes available. Identify staff members who need mental health support. Use the school's crisis team, employee assistance program, and community counselors.
- Emphasize the need to use prepared statements to control rumors.
- Be highly visible to show presence, support, and control of the situation. Make sure students feel safe.
- Make announcements about activities and future meetings.
- Arrange for excused absences for students who wish to attend the funeral. Arrange bus transportation if large numbers of students wish to attend.
- Reschedule standardized testing or other canceled activities.

### **Communicate with the Media and Community**

- The Office of the Superintendent will serve as spokesperson; In some instances the media may want to talk to campus personnel.
- Develop a written statement for staff to read in classes to the students.
- Develop a written statement for office staff and volunteers to respond to telephone inquiries.
- Give the media information when it is appropriate. Set limits for media access to students and staff to share positive information about the deceased. Limit access to school. Note: Media may show up before or after school to get student/parent reactions.
- Provide handouts for all media. Emphasize that action is being taken by the principal, staff, crisis team, and others in assisting students.
- Prepare a parent letter from the principal to send home with all students at the end of the day. In the letter, include:
  - Brief statement about the incident
  - Summary of what has occurred throughout the day

- Changes to watch for in students, both physical and academic, and nightmares
- Contact phone numbers for community assistance
- A request to notify the counseling office about any student concerns
- Send a similar letter to parents at other schools that may be affected.
- Meet with concerned parents and students if safety is a perceived or real issue. Consider having the principal, counselor, law enforcement, and public information director address the group.

### **Deal with Memorial Services and Special Activities**

- Encourage staff and students to be involved in planning for these events.
- Provide transportation if a large number of students plans to attend.
- Arrange for counselors to be available to students and staff after the funeral.
- Plan appropriate recognition (if the incident was not a suicide) through:
  - An all-school assembly
  - Tree planting

- Yearbook dedication
- High school graduation
- Scholarship fund
- Recognition at ceremonies
- Letters to the family
- Special charitable event focused on deceased's interests
- Plaque
- Invite the family members to be guests at special ceremonies, but discourage family participation in

**Consider Other Issues That Are Often Overlooked**

- Prior years' teachers, especially at other schools
- The flag: Do you lower it to half-mast? No, only by order of state/federal officials
- School marquee or reader board: Do you take all the messages off?
- How to deal with "sicko" phone calls, emails, social networking sites' messages, or video "tributes"
- How to organize or politely discourage excessive offers to help
- After-school traffic safety: Some students should not drive home.
- Who will answer cards and letters sent to the school?

assemblies within the first few months.

- Provide an activity for staff and students who do not wish to attend special recognition ceremonies.
- After an "appropriate time," schedule an official end of the grieving process for the school, such as a memorial service or balloon launch. (Consider the environmental impact of any activity.)

- The school newspaper: The circumstances of the death should dictate appropriate coverage.
- Food for the Crisis Intervention Team and staff who may work long hours without a break
- After school practices (for example, athletics or extracurricular activities) and events
- Alumni who may know the victim
- The impact of news reports on staff and students

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**If a violent death occurred on campus, consider:**

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- Students' fear of dark places and wooded areas
- Student visits to the place where the violent death occurred
- Student transfers

- Staff resignations or long-term leaves
- Late afternoon and evening practices
- Demands for curriculum changes
- Explanation of current and increased security procedures at school
- Physical and aesthetic revisions to facility or campus where the violent incident occurred
- Continued work with law enforcement and community counseling agencies
- The one-year anniversary and other “triggering events” that may cause a return to feelings of sadness and despair, or re-traumatization of survivors
- Graduation, if the student was a junior or senior

## Discussion When a Student Dies

- Review the facts and dispel rumors.
- Share your own reactions with the class. Encourage students to express their reactions in a way that is appropriate for them, noting that people react in many ways and that is okay.
- Tell students about locations for grief support. Reassure them that any adult in the building is available for support.
- Listen to what students have to say. It is important not to shut off discussion.
- Talk with students about their concerns about “what to say” to other bereaved students and family of the deceased. If it applies, share information about the deceased’s culture (beliefs and ceremonies) which will help students understand and respond comfortably to the affected family.

## Discussion When a Staff Member Dies Off Campus

- If the student or staff member died of an illness and it is appropriate to do so, discuss the illness. This is especially useful for younger children who may need to differentiate between the illness of the child who died and any medical problems with others the child knows.
- If a suicide occurs, discuss the facts and myths about suicide.
- Allow students to discuss other losses that they have experienced. Help them understand that one loss often brings up past losses; this is normal.
- Encourage students to discuss their feelings with their parents and families. Keep in mind that a “regular” day may be too hard for grieving students. Offer choices of activities.

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### Supporting others

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- Discuss and prepare for the funeral (what to expect, people’s reactions, what to do, what to say).
- Encourage mutual support.
- Discuss ways to cope with traumatic situations.
- Discuss the stages of grief.
- Encourage students to keep a journal of events and of their reactions especially in an ongoing situation.

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### Honoring the deceased (These activities are not recommended in the case of suicide.)

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- Write a eulogy.

- Write stories about the victim.
- Place a collection box in school for notes to the family.
- Design a yearbook page commemorating the deceased.
- Support a cause the deceased supported.
- Collect and display memorabilia.
- Plant a tree, create a sculpture, or paint a mural.
- Start a new school activity, such as Students Against Destructive Decisions.

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### Learning activities

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Some of the following suggestions are more appropriate for some tragedies but not for a student death.

- Write a reaction paper.
- Discuss historical precedents about issues related to a crisis.
- Write a Where I Was When it Happened report.
- Investigate laws governing similar incidents.
- Conduct a mock trial if laws were broken.
- Debate controversial issues.
- Read books about loss.

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Communication Guidelines:  
**Death of Employee or Employee's Family Member**

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Guiding values will be sensitivity to the individual situation and the importance of notifying colleagues and former colleagues to allow them to express sympathy.

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### Death of an employee

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Principal or supervisor of the employee will:

- Notify Human Resources and Risk Management of the death. Remove the employee from the staff database to prevent the grieving family from receiving any electronic messages.
- Seek family approval to share the news with the employee's colleagues and all district staff.
- Notify the department and school of the loss. If possible, call a staff meeting, or notify staff through personal calls

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### Death of an employee's spouse or child

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Principal or supervisor will:

- Seek the employee's approval to share the news with staff who works with the employee.
- Inform employee's co-workers.
- Notify the superintendent's office or communication office to prepare communication to the school board and the administrative team. Instruct the administrative team to inform any staff who may have worked with the employee in the past.
- Unless circumstances warrant, do not release communication to all staff.

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## Checklist for a Death in the School Community

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- Tell the top administrators about the crisis.
- Have the building principal call the intervention team.

- ❑ Using the phone tree, alert, put on standby or call in the team members who are adept at working with the age level of the people who are involved.
- ❑ Meet with the building principal to plan and participate in the pre-school meeting that the principal will call to inform staff and announce plans for the day.
- ❑ Have as many crisis intervention team members attend the early morning faculty meeting as possible. Having team members standing around in back or sitting with faculty is comforting.
- ❑ Offer the principal the support, presence, and services of the building administrator on the intervention team. This is usually very much appreciated.
- ❑ Quickly survey the staff as they gather, especially the principal. Be alert to visual cues, verbal signs, and affective signals as to how ready they are to proceed with the special work of the day.
- ❑ Set up a command center for the intervention team. Make sure that the room has a phone.
- ❑ Set apart “care rooms” with signs posted.
- ❑ Assist, if needed, with the following:
  - ❑ A statement to be read to students in the first hour of the day (Do not hold an assembly!)
  - ❑ An announcement of the death or other situation, including any facts that you can give without causing hysteria – Acknowledge the loss and the sadness.
  - ❑ Assurance, if possible and appropriate, of non-reoccurrence of further damage and loss
  - ❑ Permission or direction to take time to talk about the loss and the person
  - ❑ Announcement of where the care rooms are and how students can be excused – Announce that a team of specially trained grief workers is there to assist. Tell how students can identify them.
  - ❑ Assurance that you will give more information as it is available (about the funeral or memorial or about the condition of other injured people)
  - ❑ In the letter that the students carry home to their parents, include:
    - ❑ Announcement of the event and an expression of sadness and shock
    - ❑ How the school is coping with the event and caring for the students

- Assurance of further information when it is available
- Announcement of ceremonies or memorials and how students can be excused to attend
- Signs that a child may not be coping normally with the situation – Include phone numbers if help is needed and an invitation to call the school if talking or further assistance is needed.
- Assign CERT Members
- Let natural affinities guide assignments, if possible – members who know the building’s teachers or counselors, for instance.
- Assign more experienced members to the classrooms where the most severely affected students are. A team member may have to follow the class schedule of a deceased junior
  - Try not to get an intervention team leader involved in grief work so that coordination can continue smoothly. A well-trained team will:
    - Be with the students who are in affected classrooms as the announcement is read. Be the “psychological holding” and presence needed.
    - Encourage expression of feelings and discussion through children’s stories, discussion, reminders, or high or high school student throughout the day.
- Assign at least two team members to a care room.
- Assign team members to “sweep” the halls, campus, and restrooms looking for students who have been unable to remain in class. Occasionally look into classrooms and the faculty lounge to take the pulse of the building.
- Meanwhile, make a sibling search, using the child’s data card. If possible, have the spokesperson check to see that other schools who have siblings are caring for them.
- Call the parents to assure them that the school is attending to the death. Offer to continue communication and ask for facts, dates of memorials, etc.
  - pencil drawings on white 8½" x 11" paper. Use activities to teach grief and support especially as students leave the environment of school.
- One-to-one work with witnesses, siblings, and close friends may take much time. Some students may have to seek release to go home; some will return to class, only to return to the care rooms again and again that day. Walking

or bouncing a playground ball may help relieve anger.

- ❑ With the principal, plan the after-school faculty debriefing.
- ❑ Have the team leader offer to lead this meeting if the principal wishes.
- ❑ Include grief and support activities at the adult level.
- ❑ Do a two-level debriefing:
- ❑ **Technical** – What happened today? What did the students do and say? How quickly was learning restored to near normal?

- ❑ **Emotional** – How are students dealing with it emotionally? What do they need to proceed with school tomorrow?
- ❑ Plan and announce to the faculty that the intervention team will return as needed for up to 3 days. (Most needs are usually met the first day, but transfer to building staff may take up to 3 days and require checking back over the next weeks.)
- ❑ Keep data throughout the day to provide a record for the team leader’s notebook or file of events. Doing so will help in future training or reports.

# Crisis Training

# Drills, Exercises, and Crisis Scenarios

## Overview

- Human Behavior in a Crisis
- Debriefing After a Crisis
- After-Action Reports
- Types of Drills and Exercises
- Developing an Effective Emergency Exercise
- Incident Management and Response Team Training
- Crisis Scenarios

## Overview

Emergencies occur at any time and from a variety of causes. But their effect is always the same – damage and disruption to people, property, and organizations.

How staff and students respond in a crisis may be the difference between chaos and calm, or even life and

death. How a crisis is handled often determines how stakeholders and the general public view the organization post-crisis.

In this section, we explain the importance of crisis debriefing and offer practical approaches to process the incident and insights into human

behavior in a crisis and why emergency exercises and drills are

critical to preparing students and staff for a real-world emergency.

## Human Behavior in a Crisis

Experts believe that when a crisis occurs, people tend to go on autopilot. Why? Because anxiety and fear are hard-wired responses to real and perceived threats that allow us to react in such a way to protect ourselves when a traumatic experience occurs.

respond as they are trained, or have frequently drilled.

This “fight, flight or freeze response” – more formally known as *acute stress response* – triggers a flood of biological and neurological changes that enable people to immediately act to deal with the threat or crisis.

In instances, where all sorts of physiological actions trigger increases in the heart rate and breathing and tightening of muscles, normal coping mechanisms are overwhelmed. Trained staff should

## Debriefing After a Crisis

When a traumatic experience occurs, students and staff are often thrown so far out of the range of equilibrium that it becomes a struggle to restore a sense of balance in their lives. In the aftermath, they seek to reconstruct their equilibrium.

experience eventually becomes balanced, but it never returns to what it was before the crisis. It’s a new sense of normal.

Experts note the emotional roller-coaster victims and survivors

Group processing, or *Critical Incident Stress Debriefing*, is a crisis-focused discussion. Its purpose is to reduce distress and restore the equilibrium. Studies show critical incident stress

management processes also reduce the likelihood of experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and feelings of isolation.

Incident debriefing is a starting point of the healing process, a sort of “psychological first aid” to deal with the physical or psychological symptoms associated with trauma. Debriefing allows survivors to process the event and reflect on its impact.

Processing of school staff should be done first after a crisis. This is helpful as staff will likely be called on to lead or support debriefing with students in the classroom.

Debriefing models are available through the:

- National Association of School Psychologists ([www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org))
- National Organization for Victim Assistance ([www.trynova.org](http://www.trynova.org))
- International Critical Incident Stress Foundation ([www.icisf.org](http://www.icisf.org))

Mental health experts trained in critical incident stress debriefing should lead the process.

Consider these objectives for a critical incident debriefing. To:

- Help affected people process and share their emotions.

- Separate the facts involving the incident from the rumors.
- Educate people about stress reactions (for example, nightmares, fear, trouble concentrating) and how to cope with them.
- Understand the school and district response to the incident, and what will be done going forward.
- If needed, provide information about and opportunity for additional support services and information.

Debriefing sessions should be led by school counselors, social workers, or psychologists who have specific training in critical incident stress debriefing or related practices. Mental health or trauma experts may be contracted to facilitate school staff debriefing sessions.

In a debriefing session, participants are led through a process to describe the stressor, provide a factual account of the event and their thoughts during the incident. Emotional reactions to the event are also shared, and the facilitator normalizes these reactions.

#### NSPRA Tip

- Don't underestimate the emotional impact of a critical incident in a school or community, especially one where students, staff, and others may have suffered severe injuries and death.

## Critical Incident Debriefing

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The concept of a critical incident debriefing – individual or group session – is to encourage free expression of the thoughts, fears, and concerns in a supportive and confidential environment.

Professional trained facilitators may use the following process:

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**Step 1: Ask participants to share their experience:**

- Where were you when you learned about the event?
- Who were you with?
- What did you see, hear, smell, taste, or touch at that time?
- What did you do? How did you react at the time? How did you feel?

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**Step 2: Ask participants to describe what has happened to them since the incident:**

- What are some of the memories that stand out?
- What do you remember most?
- How have you reacted?

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**Step 3: Ask participants to think about what has happened and to predict what will happen in the next few days or weeks:**

- What are some of the memories that stand out?
- After all you've been through, what do you think will happen at your school in the next few days or weeks?
- Do you think you will continue to be affected?
- Do you have any worries about what will happen next?
- What is your hope for the future?

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**Step 4: Suggest resources, such as parents, counselors, or community counseling agencies. Ask participants to think about people in their lives who can help them cope with this loss.**

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**NSPRA Note**

- The stress that staff experience is often exacerbated by the need to return to the scene of the incident and the tendency to deny themselves the natural responses to cope with stress in an effort to care for students first. The school district must consider employees' needs in the same way it cares for students.
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## Debriefing CERT

Equally important to critical incident debriefing is the immediate after-action discussion and evaluation of the school's CERT and/or DERT performance. This type of debriefing is a tool for Crisis Response Team members to share their perspectives on key strengths and areas for improvement.

It is important to conduct this process at the end of the event or exercise while all participants are present and the activities and discussions are fresh in their minds. The purpose of the debrief is to collect observations and thoughts about the exercise.

Consider gathering feedback on the following:

- What plans and procedures should be considered for implementation to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from the incident used in the exercise scenario?
- Are roles and responsibilities of the various positions of the CERT clearly defined?
- How were decisions made? Who had authority to make decisions?
- What information would be shared about the incident used in the exercise scenario? How was information shared with other response agencies or personnel? With the public?
- Identify the top 3 strengths discovered during the exercise.
- Identify the top 3 areas for improvement discovered during the exercise.
- What additional planning efforts or needs were discovered during the exercise?
- What additional community partners should be included in future planning efforts to help the school or district respond to this type of event?
- What additional training needs have been identified as a result of participating in this exercise and what is needed to respond to this type event?

## Crisis meeting (debrief) agenda

During an initial briefing with staff about the crisis, the following specific agenda items will help in the review process:

<b>Situation Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ What appears to have happened?</li><li>▪ Confirm facts (when, immediate known consequences, likely consequences).</li><li>▪ Define the scope of proposed situation.</li></ul>
<b>Initial Response Status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ What is being done, why, and by whom?</li><li>▪ What is the likely implementation time and hoped-for results?</li></ul>
<b>Initial Communication Status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Who knows and who needs to know immediately and later?</li><li>▪ What are the 3 to 5 key messages to share with parents, media, and community?</li></ul>
<b>Short-term Response Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ What must be done in the next several hours and how?</li><li>▪ Delegate crisis communication responsibilities.</li><li>▪ What human and material resources are available or needed?</li></ul>
<b>Short-term Communication Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Staff, faculty, students, families, others?</li></ul>

## After-Action Reports

An After-Action Report (AAR) is a retrospective analysis of a critical incident and is often used to evaluate a school drill or exercise. After-Action Reports provide an opportunity for Emergency Response Teams to:

- Analyze incident outcomes.
- Identify strengths to be maintained and built upon.
- Identify potential areas for improvements.
- Support development of correction actions.

After-Action Reports are also used to evaluate school drills and emergency exercises to:

- Identify emergency response procedures that need to be improved.
- Identify areas in an emergency management plan that need revisions.
- Capture key lessons learned.

## After Action Report Form

School or facility: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_-- \_\_\_\_

Person completing this form: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Incident date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Incident type: \_\_\_\_\_

What part of the response went well? What worked?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What could have gone better?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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What, if any, incident command positions were used?

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Identify additional needs highlighted by event (that is, training, safety materials, personnel)

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## **Drills and Exercises**

### **Event Summary**

What happened?

### **Goals and Objectives**

What outcomes were anticipated in the response?

### **Key Events**

Pre and Post: Post the time, dates, and locations of key events.

### **Participating Agencies**

Which other agencies responded?

### **Communications**

What methods of internal and external communications were used during the response?

### **Findings, Lessons Learned and Limitations**

What worked, what didn't work, and what were the gaps and barriers?

## Types of Crisis Drills and Exercises

The primary purpose of any crisis drill or exercise is to improve the operational readiness of school and district staff. They also expose limitations of existing crisis response plans, such as procedural gaps, training needs and emergency preparedness.

It is essential that all school staff, including substitute or temporary personnel, are prepared to respond to emergency situations as part of their crisis planning and preparation. During a crisis there will not be time to think about what to do next.

Response training is critical because it:

- Creates the cultural condition to know what to do in a real-world crisis.
- Demonstrates the necessary teamwork needed when responding to and recovering from an emergency.

School crisis response training can be **discussion-based** OR **operations-based** (*emergency drills or full-scale exercises*), each of which are useful in preparing students, staff, and crisis response teams. It is best to begin with simple discussion-based exercises and state-required drills before moving to more complex scenario exercises.

### School-based Crisis Drills

State laws require certain types of drills – from evacuation or fire to lockdown or shelter-in-place – and schools have expanded their preparation by conducting a broader range of enhanced exercises.

When conducting drills, ensuring they are realistic and taken seriously by all participants is tremendously valuable. Most school drills are done under perfect and very unrealistic conditions, where everyone is in their classrooms and able to secure themselves at a moment's notice.

These drills almost always go flawlessly because they are practiced under ideal conditions and not in everyday situations. Such drills do not consider normal occurrences such as substitute teachers in the building who have little or no crisis response training; students in bathrooms, walking the hallways during passing period, or playing outside on the playground; and teachers in areas without access to communications.

Drills should be conducted at various times through a normal school-day schedule, including during passing periods or when large concentrations of students are in the cafeteria, gymnasium, or outside the building.

Consider practicing unannounced drills or exercises where “artificial barriers” are put in place to force students and staff to react to these uncommon situations.

When possible, coordinate school-based drills with local law enforcement and fire officials to ensure responses are complementary. Coordination among schools, police, fire, and EMS first responders is essential to understanding the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved.

Which type of drills are conducted and how they are conducted are critical to both their effectiveness and minimizing the potential to cause trauma or harm unintentionally. However, age-appropriate training is necessary, and required in most cases, for all levels of the educational system. Learning the proper way to escape, seek cover, or find concealment – whether directed to do so or on their own – in the midst of a tragedy may be the difference between life and death.

Repetitiveness of standard response drills, like evacuation and lockdowns, can increase students’ knowledge and skills of how to respond in a real-life incident, without elevating their anxiety or perceived safety.

### **Emergency Exercises and Scenarios**

Training exercises and drills to prepare for specific threats and hazards should be based on the needs and context of each school and community. School officials must balance the physical and psychological risks associated with these types of exercises when including students and staff.

Schools must have a clearly defined purpose and evaluation process that identifies areas of strength and areas that must be improved as the school community continues to refine ongoing comprehensive crisis preparedness and response plans.

### **Tabletop Exercises**

With tabletop exercises, incident response team members are presented with a crisis scenario in an informal, stress-free environment. Participants are asked to discuss what their response roles would require them to do in the likely incident.

These drills help response teams to better understand their roles, responsibilities, and action steps.

Tabletop exercises are designed to prompt an in-depth, constructive, problem-solving discussion about the school's current response plan. The skills learned from tabletop exercises will improve thinking, communications, teamwork, and decision making. Consider these elements for a successful tabletop exercise:

- Use a **trained facilitator** to lay out the scenario, challenge participants' assumptions, and offer a constructive evaluation covering what the team did well and what areas need improvement. Facilitators also help ensure that all participants are actively involved.
- There is a difference between crises that are possible and those that are more probable. Use **scenarios associated with the types of risks or potential hazards that have a probability of occurring in your specific community.**
- Crises typically do not occur predictably. **Inject unexpected events into the discussion,** such as a "new development," or a "crisis within a crisis" to make it more realistic.

### **Functional Exercises**

Functional exercises simulate emergency situations that test one or more functions of a school's emergency response plan during an interactive, time-pressured, simulated event.

Functional exercises can be conducted in a school district's emergency operations center, but do not involve moving emergency personnel and equipment found in a full-scale exercise.

Participants are directed by exercise controllers and simulators via telephones and radios and other forms of media, and they must respond appropriately to the incidents that arise.

Evaluators critique the exercise and team's performance.

### **Full-Scale Exercises**

The full-scale drill simulates emergency situations in real time with all necessary resources deployed, allowing for the evaluation of operational capabilities of emergency management systems in a highly stressful environment.

An effective full-scale crisis exercise requires collaboration among the school system and local public safety partners, such as law enforcement, SWAT, fire, public health, hospitals, EMS and emergency management agencies depending on the scenario.

It is essential that a full-scale exercise is carefully planned and does not cause undue harm or anxiety. The local community and parents must be informed about the drill.

Although the goal is to create a realistic situation and a demanding test of response measures, it should not require exposing students and staff to potentially traumatic stimuli (for example, shooting blanks, using fake blood) to meet drill objectives. This is likely to create unnecessary anxiety, generate distressing reactions, and lead to increased threat perceptions.

### **Benefits of Emergency Exercises**

Drills and training exercises validate existing emergency plans, policies, protocols, roles and responsibilities by:

- Testing the capabilities of the incident management or response team
- Providing a gap analysis to identify deficiencies and problems in the current program
- Familiarizing students and staff with plans and procedures through low-stress activities
- Preparing the incident management or response team to collaborate with local, state, and federal agencies
- Increasing the confidence of the team while strengthening its ability to respond effectively to an emergency

## CERT Member Training

The CERT should participate in emergency management practices reviews and crisis scenario or tabletop exercises at least twice a year or quarterly.

### Essential Content for Team Training

- Crisis situation description and theory/Types of school crises
- Childhood reactions to crisis by age, with the most common reactions being worry about the future, decline in school performance, regression in behavior, and sleeping problems
- Children’s developmental stages in understanding death
- Importance of giving everyone the facts to dispel rumors
- Permission for a wide range of emotions.
- Give people a chance to tell their stories.
- Each person has a unique history of loss; unresolved issues may resurface.
- The severity of crisis response is affected by event intensity, duration, and the victim’s stability.
- Provide emotional support as soon as possible and keep together staff and students who have experienced a crisis.
- Keep the school open and have it viewed as source of support.
- Children are more resilient than adults, but they still need help.
- Mental health workers must seek out those who need their help after a crisis.
- Parent meetings are an effective way to assist children by helping parents understand the typical childhood reaction to a crisis and respond with patience, love, tolerance, and support.
- Have CERT members frequently evaluate progress of crisis management.
- Develop a checklist of crisis steps to guide the team’s actions.
- Develop a calling tree to enable the administrator to alert school personnel to a crisis so that they can begin planning.
- Develop policies and procedures to ensure a close working relationship with the local emergency response agencies.
- Clarify communication issues such as who calls the

superintendent and others who must know about the crisis.

- Conduct CERT meetings to process and review crisis team

activities and to emphasize how to prevent or better manage crisis events.

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## Sample Training Agenda for Incident Management or Crisis Response Team

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### Developing a School-site Crisis Management Plan

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- Managing the crisis
- Preparation - before it happens
- Crisis response - when it happens
- Follow up - post intervention
- Delegation
- Dealing with communities
- Rumor-control within the school
- Media procedures
- Communication with parents and community
- Managing grief and loss
- Stages of grief
- First 48 hours
- Memorials and anniversaries
- Dealing with legal issues
- In loco parentis
- Confidentiality
- Negligence and liability issues
- Taking care of caretakers
- Helping staff cope with crisis
- Self-care for team members
- Understanding community support and referrals
- Identify community support resources
- Establish and maintain community linkages

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### Crisis Responses

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- Critical incidents at school
- Critical incidents not at school
- Natural disasters

- Suicide
- Other deaths

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### Community Support Services

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- Emergency assistance
- Public safety agencies (fire, police, emergency)
- Mental health
- Shelter and housing
- Food and clothing
- Emergency family services
- Bilingual and refugee resources
- Disaster relief
  
- Medical services
- Counseling services (nonprofit and community agencies)
- Health services and clinics
- Medical and dental
- Substance abuse and psychiatric
- Hotlines
- Crisis
- Suicide
- Rape
- Child abuse (including sexual abuse)
- Crime
- Other community hotlines

## Sample Scenarios Case Study 1

### Bomb Threat

It is 8:30 A.M. on a Friday morning at \_\_\_\_\_ Middle School, a school of 900 students. Classes have just started. Two 7<sup>th</sup> graders overheard a conversation between other students outside school and tipped the principal to the possibility of a bomb in a locker. The principal checks the locker and observes a red object covered in wires.

Consider the events and begin a discussion about how to address the situation?

1. **Identification:** What steps will be taken to determine whether the bomb is real? What other facts do you need?
2. **Communication:** Who will be notified to help deal with this situation?
3. **Action:** Who will decide how to respond to the threat of a bomb? Who will be involved in the decision-making? What is your action plan to deal with this situation? How will you protect the students and staff?
4. **Crisis Response Team:** Who will be part of the Crisis Response Team? From the school? From the district? From other agencies? Who will coordinate the effort? What will each unit do?
5. **Logistical support team:** Who will be on standby to provide support and assistance when needed?
6. **Crisis intervention team:** Should the crisis intervention team be alerted?
7. **Media:** The Office of the Superintendent will deal with media; however, the campus must prepare because some media entities will make attempts to get on premises.

8. **Key messages:** What do you need to communicate about the incident?
  
9. **Priority audiences:** Who do you need to communicate with?
  
10. **Communication vehicles:** How will you deliver your message to each audience?
  
11. **Next steps:** What do you need to plan for in the aftermath of the incident?

(After the group has had time to discuss questions 1-11, give them one of the following new development scenarios and have them consider what new actions must be taken or adjustments made to their plans.)

**Bomb Threat: Inject #1**

It is now 9:15 A.M. The student whose locker the alleged bomb is in comes forward and admits that he made the fake device to impress his peers. He claims he had no intention of hurting anyone; he just wanted to scare some older students he claims have been harassing him.

What is your next step?

What messages will you now communicate to parents, staff, students, and community?

**Bomb Threat: Inject #2**

The police have determined that the bomb is real and are making preparations to diffuse it. Students are being evacuated by bus. Just as the buses are being loaded, the district learns that another campus (located across town) has received a serious bomb threat.

How do you respond to the new threat?

How will this change your communication and audiences?

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## Case Study 2

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### Hostage Situation

It is 10 A.M. on a Monday morning in May at \_\_\_\_High School, a school of \_\_,000 students. A 10<sup>th</sup> grade student rushes into the office and says he saw a boy with a gun through the window of the closed door to Room 211, Mrs. Garza’s English classroom. The assistant principal contacts the school’s security assistant by radio, and she confirms what the student reported and that other students are in the room as well. She recognizes the boy with the gun as J. Gonzalez, a senior who had been told the previous Friday that he would not graduate because he was failing English. The assistant principal calls Mrs. Garza on the intercom. Jose responds, saying that he is going to kill Mrs. Garza because she has ruined his life.

Consider the events and begin a discussion about how to address the situation?

1. **Identification:** What steps will be taken to ascertain how serious Jose is about carrying out his threat? What other facts do you need?
  
12. **Communication:** Who will be notified to help deal with this situation?
  
13. **Action:** Who will decide what to do in response to this hostage situation? Who will be involved in the decision making? What is your action plan to deal with this situation? How will you protect the students and staff?
  
14. **Crisis response team:** Who will be part of the crisis response team? From the school? From the district? From other agencies? Who will coordinate the effort? What will each unit do?
  
15. **Logistical support team:** Who will be on standby to provide support and assistance when needed?

16. **Crisis intervention team:** Should the crisis intervention team be alerted?
  
17. **Media:** Who will serve as spokesperson and provide a communication link with the media? What should be released?
  
18. **Key messages:** What do you need to communicate about the incident?
  
19. **Priority audiences:** Who do you need to communicate with?
  
20. **Communication vehicles:** How will you deliver your message to each audience?
  
21. **Next steps:** What do you need to plan for in the aftermath of the incident?

**(After the group has had time to discuss questions 1-11, give them one of the following new development scenarios and have them consider what new actions must be taken or adjustments made to their plans.)**

**Hostage Situation: Inject #1**

As word of the hostage situation goes out on police scanners and is picked up by the media, parents begin arriving at the school and access roads are quickly becoming blocked. A crowd of upset parents is forming outside the school entrance.

How do you provide for police and emergency vehicle access to the school?

How do you handle the crowd of parents?

**Hostage Situation: Inject #2**

The police SWAT team is called to the school and are en route to the site. The principal has received a message via two-way radio from a school custodian that several adults,

whom he recognizes as parents of students, have managed to enter the school building through a side entrance. The custodian is attempting to deter an additional group of parents who are demanding to be allowed in the building to find their children.

What do you do next?

How does this change your communication about the situation?

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## Case Study 3

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### School Bus Accident

At 4 P.M. on a Thursday in early October, the entire 4<sup>th</sup> grade class is returning to \_\_\_\_ Elementary from a field trip from the San Antonio Zoo. At an intersection 4 miles from their school, a dump truck hits one of school bus broadside. Police and EMS are dispatched after a call is received from a passing motorist. The dispatcher has notified the district's transportation department that one of its buses has been involved in a serious accident involving multiple injuries.

Consider the events and begin a discussion about how to address the situation?

1. **Identification:** What steps will be taken to determine the seriousness of the bus accident? What other facts do you need?
2. **Communication:** When the conditions have been identified, who will be notified to stand by to implement the action plan?
3. **Action:** Who will decide what to do in response to this accident? Who will be involved in the decision making? What is your action plan to deal with this accident?
4. **CERT;** Who will be part of the CERT? Who will coordinate the effort? What will each unit do?
5. **Logistical support team:** Who will be on standby to provide support and assistance when needed?
6. **Crisis Intervention Team:** Should the CERT Team be alerted?

7. **Media:** The Office of the Superintendent shall serve as the spokesperson
  
8. **Key messages:** What do you need to communicate about the incident?
  
9. **Priority audiences:** Who do you need to communicate with?
  
10. **Communication vehicles:** How will you deliver your message to each audience?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. **Next steps:** What do you need to plan for in the aftermath of the incident?

**(After the group has had time to discuss questions 1-11, give them one of the following new development scenarios and have them consider what new actions must be taken or adjustments made to their plans.)**

**School Bus Accident: Inject #1**

It is now 6:00 P.M. \_\_\_\_ Elementary School’s annual Fall Festival, run by the PTA, is scheduled to begin at 6:00 P.M. The PTA treasurer’s son is one of the injured students on the bus. You have also just learned that the motorist who dialed 9-1-1 to alert authorities to the accident is the older sister of another of the injured students. She is a senior at a neighboring High School.

A decision must be made about whether to hold the Fall Festival this evening. Who must be involved in this decision? How will you notify parents of the decision?

Does the district have a responsibility to reach out to the student who made the 9-1-1 call? If so, how?

**School Bus Accident: Inject #2**

Through their accident investigation and interviews with eye-witnesses, the police have determined that the school bus driver is at fault for failing to yield at the intersection. You have just received word that one student has died at the hospital and another student is in critical condition with severe spinal cord injuries.

How will your communications change?

What steps will the district need to take to manage its reputation with parents and the community?

# Letters and Additional Resources

## **Review and Revise School Safety Policies**

Although research supports the fact that schools are still one of the safest places for children, educators are faced with the daunting task of responding to safety concerns of parents and students whose fears are fed by tragic school shootings and the resulting media focus. This climate of fear requires educators to respond swiftly and to err on the side of caution whenever student or staff safety is in question.

Keeping school board policies up to date and in the public eye has become more important with each high-profile mass casualty incident. The Board of Education should review policies related to crisis management and school safety annually and as part of the debriefing process after any crisis situation.

Conduct an annual policy review in a public meeting. This allows the board to:

- Raise awareness about your district's commitment to keeping children safe.
- Reassure the public that safety procedures are in place.
- Provide clear direction for staff in the event of an emergency.
- Inform parents and the public about improved safety and security procedures to better protect students and staff.
- Explain how safety procedures initiated for a specific incident reduced the number of related incidents at school (if it applies).

## Tips for Parents to Help Create Safe Schools

Parents can help create safe schools. Here are ideas that parents in other communities have tried:

- Discuss the school's discipline policy with your child. Show your support for the rules, and help your child understand the reasons for them.
- Involve your child in setting rules for proper behavior at home and school.
- Help your child understand the importance of following directions during any type of incident at school.
- Talk with your child about the violence he or she sees – on television, in video games, on the Internet, and in the neighborhood. Help your child understand the consequences of violence.

- Teach your children how to solve problems; praise them when they follow through.
- Help your child find ways to show anger that do not involve verbally or physically hurting others. When you get angry, use it as an opportunity to model these appropriate responses for your child and talk about it.
- Help your child understand the value of accepting individual differences.
- Note any disturbing behaviors in your child. For example, frequent angry outbursts, excessive fighting and bullying of other children, cruelty to animals, fire setting, frequent behavior problems at school and in the neighborhood, lack of friends, and alcohol or drug use can be signs of serious problems. Get help for your child. Talk with a trusted professional in your child's school or in the community.
- Keep lines of communication open with your child – even when it is tough. Encourage your child always to let you know where and with whom he or she will be. Get to know your child's friends.
- Listen to your child if he or she shares concerns about friends who may be exhibiting troubling behaviors. Share this information with a trusted professional, such as the school psychologist, principal, or teacher.
- Monitor your children's Internet use, including social media sites. Ask them what they do online and which websites they visit. Put parental controls on inappropriate websites and access to social media sites.
- Be involved in your child's school life by supporting and reviewing homework, talking with his or her teachers, and attending school functions.
- Work with your child's school to make it more responsive to all students and to all families. Share your ideas about how to encourage family involvement, welcome families, and include them in meaningful ways in their children's education.
- Volunteer to work with school-based and community groups concerned with violence prevention.
- Talk with the parents of your child's friends. Discuss how you can form a team to ensure your children's safety.
- Find out if your employer offers provisions for parents to participate in school activities.

## Tips for Students to Help Create Safe Schools

Students can do a lot to help create safe schools. Here are ideas from students in other school districts:

- Listen to friends if they share troubling feelings or thoughts. Encourage them to get help from a trusted adult, such as a school psychologist, counselor, social worker, leader from the faith community, or other professional. If you are very concerned, seek help for them. Share your concerns with your parents.
- Create, join, or support student organizations that combat violence, such as Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE) and Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD).
- Work with local businesses and community groups to organize youth-oriented activities that help young people think of ways to prevent school and community violence *before it starts*. Share ideas for how these community groups and businesses can support students' efforts.
- Organize an assembly and invite the administration and counselors – along with student panelists – to share ideas about how to deal with violence, intimidation, and bullying.
- Get involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating your school's violence prevention and response plan.
- Participate in violence prevention programs such as peer mediation and conflict resolution. Employ these new skills in other settings such as the home, neighborhood, and community.
- Work with teachers and administrators to create a safe process for reporting threats, bullying, intimidation, weapon possession, drug selling, gang activity, graffiti, and vandalism.
- Help develop and participate in activities that promote students' understanding of differences and that respect the rights of all.
- Volunteer to be a mentor for younger students and tutor peers.
- Know your school's code of conduct and model responsible behavior. Avoid being part of a crowd when fights break out. Refrain from teasing, bullying, and intimidating peers.

- Be a role model – take personal responsibility by reacting to anger without physically or verbally harming others.
- Seek help from your parents or a trusted adult, such as a school psychologist, social worker, counselor, or teacher if you are experiencing intense feelings of anger, fear, anxiety, or depression.

# Sample Letters

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- Overview
  - Death of a Student
  - Death by Suicide
  - Death of an Employee (or Family Member)
  - Accidents Involving Students and Staff
  - Announcements of Death (to Staff, Students, and Families)
  - General Announcements (for Other Incidents)
  - References

## Overview

When a critical situation arises, school administrators must provide a rapid, but thoughtful response. As part of your school's Emergency Response Plan, prepare skeleton letters in advance to communicate with the school community.

These letters should convey essential, concise, and immediate information to the affected audiences. Depending on the situation, the letters should be directed to students, staff, parents, and the community.

In this section, you'll find sample letters drawn from school district files around the country. They cover a broad spectrum of crises. Use them as a template for your school or make changes tailored to your school community.

When preparing communication, keep in mind the essential components for a good crisis

response letter. In addition to providing specific details of the event, the letter should:

- Reassure parents and guardians.
- Keep the information simple and straightforward.
- Reiterate the school's position on the issue.
- Convey a sense of stability and partnership in dealing with the situation.
- Provide ways for parents and guardians to talk to their children.

Listed with many of the samples are helpful tips for additional information that can be included in letters or other communication (for example, email, social media or website postings, and parent notification system messages).

### NSPRA TIP

- Managing any crisis successfully is less about saying the right things and more about doing the right things.

## Death of a Student

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### Sample Death of a Student Letter #1

The faculty and staff of (*name of school*) regret to inform you that on (*date*), a tragic event occurred on our campus resulting in the death of (*name of student*), one of our (*grade level*) graders. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to the family.

Today in class, the teachers and (*Crisis Response Team, counselors*) talked with the students about (*name of student*) and their feelings. Please be sensitive to any changes in your child's behavior. Over the next few days, encourage your child to express his or her feelings and listen attentively.

It will be helpful to recognize the various steps we all go through in the grieving process: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Some of the common reactions that children experience when reacting to a traumatic event are:

- Restlessness, nervous behavior
- Trouble concentrating
- Difficulty sleeping, nightmares
- "Clingy" behavior, fear of being alone
- Asking questions over and over again
- Remembering previous losses and events

If you have any concerns about your child's reactions to this loss, feel free to contact your child's teacher, the school counselors, or the administrative staff.

Thank you for your concern at this difficult time.

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### Sample Death of a Student Letter #2

It is with deep sorrow that we are reporting the death of (*name of student*), one of our (*grade level*), who was hit by a vehicle yesterday morning. (*First name of student*) succumbed to (*his or her*) injuries last evening.

Our thoughts and prayers are with (*first name of student*) and (*his or her*) family during this difficult time. We also offer condolences to all the (*name of school*) students and staff members, especially (*his or her*) classmates, teachers and support staff.

If you have any concerns about your child's reactions to this loss, feel free to contact your child's teacher, the school counselors, or the administrative staff. Thank you for your concern and well wishes.

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### Sample Death of a Student Letter #3

We were saddened to learn of the death of (*name of student*), a classmate of your child, and we extend our heartfelt sympathy to (*his or her*) family. Many children have been affected by this news. We encourage you to be especially sensitive and prepared to offer support to your child during this time.

Your child's class has been informed of this loss. Over the next few days, encourage your child to express his or her own feelings. And listen attentively. You may see behavior changes, loss of concentration, physical complaints, or regression.

If you have any concerns about your child's reaction to this loss, contact your child's teacher, the school counselors, or administrative staff.

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### Sample Death of a Student Letter #4

As you may know, our school community experienced a death this week. (*Name of student*) died as a result of (*vehicle accident, serious illness, unexpectedly, etc.*) Our school will provide an opportunity for students and staff to discuss and work through issues related to the crisis and grief process.

Your child will have the option to participate in group or individual counseling provided by members of the school Crisis Response Team (*and the district's*

*Critical Incident Team*). Participation in these activities is voluntary. Staff will continue to be available as needed to help students deal with their grief.

Please pay particular attention to your child's emotional needs during the next few weeks, especially if he or she was close to the deceased.

- Encourage your child to talk with you about the feelings he or she is experiencing concerning the death. Judiciously sharing similar experiences that you have had may be very useful. Make yourself available to talk about the death and to answer questions.
- Be aware that your children may not feel like themselves for a while. Talk about ways to feel better.
- Initiate a discussion of the death with your child. Research shows that this helps the healing process.
- It is strongly recommended that you accompany your child to the funeral or memorial service, if you judge that this is necessary.
- Watch for ongoing signs of difficulty, which may indicate that your child may need additional help. Possible signs are prolonged sadness, withdrawal from social contact, changes in eating or sleeping habits, or other behaviors unusual for your child.

If you need assistance, please contact the school. Our counselors can provide a list of school community resources.

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### Sample Death of a Student Letter #5

We at (*name of school*) are saddened by the death of (*name of student*). (*Student name*) was a student in (*classroom teacher's name and grade*).

Counselors visited the classrooms today to help our students cope with this sad news. These are the topics counselors and teachers discussed with students:

- **What we know to be true:** We have talked with the children about rumors and we have told the students the facts as we know them. It is important not to generate stories.
- **Feelings:** We reinforced that all feelings are appropriate. Many children are feeling sad and mad at the loss of their friend and schoolmate. Children may

also feel scared that this could happen to them. All of these feelings are normal. It is important for us to explore these feelings and to accept them.

Nightmares are a common occurrence and may be a result of things children have seen or heard. Reassure your child of your love and comfort them.

- **What is death?** Children have a difficult time understanding the concept of death. They need to know that death is part of life. Your personal beliefs can help clarify this confusing concept.
- **Commemoration:** Some students expressed interest in sending cards to the student's family. This can be an important part of the grieving process and is encouraged for those students who wish to do so. Children are advised to discuss ways to remember a person who has died, with their families.

In an effort to further assist you in helping your child during this difficult period, we have prepared the attached list of guidelines. If you have any questions or concerns, please call the school counselors office to speak with (*counselor's name*) at (*phone number*).

• **TIP**

- Provide information about memorial services, funds, and funeral arrangements.
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## Death by Suicide

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### Sample Death by Suicide Letter #1

The faculty and staff of (*name of school*) are deeply saddened to learn of the reported suicide of (*name of student*), one of our (*grade level*) grade students. We encourage you to be especially sensitive and prepared to offer support to your child during this time.

We have asked (*counselors, teachers, Crisis Response Team*) to help our school community deal with this loss. We are doing everything that we can to help your child and our staff through this tragic experience. Over the next few days, encourage your child to express (*his or her*) feelings and listen attentively.

It will be helpful to recognize the various steps that we all go through in the grieving process: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. We have enclosed a handout on the warning signs of suicide for your information.

You may also want to contact the (*local crisis center and hotline*) if your family has any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your concern and support during this difficult time.

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### Sample Death by Suicide Letter #2

I am writing with great sadness to inform you that one of our students, (*name of student*), has died. Our thoughts and sympathies are with (*his or her*) family and friends.

All of the students were given the news of the death by their teacher in (*advisory/homeroom*) this morning. I have included a copy of the announcement that was read to them.

The cause of death was suicide. We want to take this opportunity to remind our community that suicide is a very complicated act. We do not know all the causes or motivations for a suicide. One thing is certain: there are treatments that can help. Suicide should never, ever be an option. I am including some information that may be helpful to you in discussing suicide with your child.

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Members of our Crisis Response Team are available to meet with students individually and in groups today and in the coming days and weeks. Please contact the school office if you feel your child is in need of additional assistance; we also have a list of school and community mental health resources.

Information about the funeral service will be made available as soon as we have it. If your child wishes to attend, we strongly encourage you to accompany him or her to the service. If the funeral is scheduled during school hours, students who wish to attend will need parental permission to be released from school.

The school will be hosting a meeting for parents and others in the community at *(date/time/location)*. Members of our Crisis Response Team *(or mental health professionals)* will be present to provide information about common reactions following a suicide and how adults can help youths cope. They will also provide information about suicide and mental illness in adolescents, including risk factors and warning signs of suicide, and will address attendees' questions and concerns.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or one of our school counselors with questions or concerns.

• **TIP**

- If the student's body has not yet been recovered or there is an ongoing investigation, schools should state the cause of death is still being determined and that additional information will be forthcoming once it has been confirmed.
- Acknowledge rumors exist, and remind students that rumors can be deeply hurtful and unfair to the missing or deceased person, the family, and friends.

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### Sample Death by Suicide Letter #3

I am writing with great sadness to inform you that one of our students, (*name of student*) has died. Our thoughts and sympathies are with (*his or her*) family and friends.

All of the students were given the news of the death by their teacher in (*advisory/homeroom*) this morning. I have included a copy of the announcement that was read to them.

Authorities have not determined the cause of death. We are aware there has been some talk about the possibility that this was a suicide death. Rumors may begin to circulate, and we ask that you not spread rumors since they may turn out to be inaccurate and can be deeply hurtful and unfair to (*name of student*) as well as (*his or her*) family and friends. We'll do our best to provide accurate information as it becomes available.

Members of our Crisis Response Team are available to meet with students individually and in groups today as well as over the coming days and weeks. Please contact the school office if you feel your child is in need of additional assistance; we have a list of school and community mental health resources.

Information about the funeral service will be made available as soon as we have it. If your child wishes to attend, we strongly encourage you to accompany him or her to the service. If the funeral is scheduled during school hours, students who wish to attend will need parental permission to be released from school.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or one of the school counselors with any questions or concerns.

• **TIP**

- While the fact that a student has died may be disclosed, information about the cause of death should not be disclosed to students until the family has been consulted.
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### Sample Death by Suicide Letter #4

It is with great sadness that I share with you (*name of student*), one of our (*grade level*) grade students, has died. All of us want you to know that we are here to help in any way we can.

The family has requested that information about the cause of death not be shared at this time.

We are aware that there has been some talk about the possibility that this was a suicide death. Rumors may begin to circulate, and we ask that you not spread rumors since they may turn out to be inaccurate and can be deeply hurtful and unfair to (*name of student*), as well as (*his or her*) family and friends. We'll do our best to provide accurate information as it becomes available.

Since the subject has been raised, we do want to take this opportunity to remind you that suicide, when it does occur, is a very complicated act. We do not know all the causes or motivations for a suicide. One thing is certain: there are treatments that can help. Suicide should never, ever be an option.

Each of us will react to (*name of student*)'s death in our own way, and we need to be respectful of each other. Feeling sad is a normal response to any loss. Some students may not have known (*name of student*), very well and may not be as affected, while others may experience a great deal of sadness. Some may find they are having difficulty concentrating on schoolwork, and others may find that diving into work is a good distraction.

We have counselors available to help our school community deal with this sad loss. If you're child wishes to talk to a counselor, please encourage (*him or her*) to seek assistance from a teacher or counselor.

## Death of an Employee (or Family Member)

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### Sample Death of an Employee Letter #1

We are deeply saddened by the death of one of our teachers, (*name of employee*), who died this morning after (*a long illness, a serious accident, etc.*). (*Name of employee*) was a (*grade*) teacher who had worked for (*number*) years at our school.

Your child's class had the opportunity to talk to (*crisis team member, counselors, teacher*) about some of their concerns. Your child may want to talk to you about his or her feelings. Talking about feelings will help your child deal with this tragic event.

Funeral services will be held (*provide details*). If you decide that you would like your child to attend the service, parents are responsible for seeing that the students get to and from the service.

If you have any concerns about your child's reactions to this loss, please contact your child's teacher, the school counselors, or the administrative staff. Thank you for your concern at this difficult time.

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## Sample Death of an Employee Letter #2

I am sorry to inform you that a staff person died this morning. (*Insert what information can be shared about the cause and circumstances of the death.*)

Our Crisis Response Team has been available to respond to the emotional needs of the students, and will continue to provide support for the remainder of the week. (*Identify specific grief counseling or classroom activities associated with the school's response.*)

If your family has experienced a death or similar loss recently, the death of (*name of employee*) may bring up feelings about that death. This is a normal experience. Please let your child's (*teacher or counselor*) know if there is any additional information the school should be aware of so we can provide the support your child needs.

Any time death touches us, it is stressful. This sudden death may be disturbing to you as well as to your child. It is for this reason that we especially want you to know of our care and support.

### Sample Child Abduction or Attempted Abduction Letter #1

In light of the recent abduction of (*name*) in (*another part of our community*), and because of reports of suspicious activity in our own area, we are communicating with all parents and guardians.

The facts are (*include verified information*). We are currently working with local law enforcement to ensure our campuses are safe. Meanwhile, we remind all parents and children to exercise caution at this time.

Police have indicated that if you observe suspicious activity, you should note the following information and then call 9-1-1:

- Record the license number, color, make, and model of the vehicle, as well as any identifying marks on the vehicle.
- Describe the suspect, noting approximate height and weight; color, length and style of hair; presence of facial hair; distinctive clothing; or other markings.

We reviewed safety precautions with students and reminded them to walk in groups or pairs rather than alone, and to be alert to what is going on around them.

We encourage you to reinforce these messages with your children and ask them to take the same precautions during non-school hours and on weekends. You may also want to discuss the tips listed above in case they observe suspicious activity.

We share your desire to keep all children safe, and we will keep you informed of any new developments.

## Sample Child Abduction or Attempted Abduction Letter #2

The safety of our students is the number one priority at (*name of school*). As always, we want to keep you informed of important issues in our school community. We learned an adult male approached one of our students walking home from school last night at (*provide location*). The male attempted to lure the student into his car. Law enforcement is currently investigating.

Anyone with information that may be helpful to the investigation is encouraged to contact the (*name of locale*) Police Department at (*telephone number*).

This incident serves as a reminder for students to practice safety measures while going to and from school. The following will help you discuss safety with your child.

- Walk in groups or pairs to and from school.
- Never accept rides from strangers.
- If approached by a stranger, keep a safe distance and think of a direction to run if needed.
- Run to a safe place, i.e. school, church, store, etc.
- Shout and yell as loud as you can.
- Never give out your name or address to people you do not know. This is especially true on the Internet.
- Always let your parents know where you are; take the same route to and from school each day.

### Sample Weapon at School Letter #1

Recognizing parents' rights and needs for timely and accurate information about student safety, I want to share with you an incident that occurred recently at *(name of school)*.

Yesterday afternoon, a *(grade level)* grade student was taken into custody for allegedly bringing a weapon onto school premises.

This morning an anonymous tip was provided to a teacher that a student might have been in possession of a gun. The school, in cooperation with the *(name)* Police Department, began an immediate investigation. Our school administrators and the *(name)* Police Department questioned witnesses and the student. The student faces disciplinary action and is currently not in school.

As with all matters of student safety, we have taken this very seriously and have acted accordingly, utilizing both school system disciplinary recourse and the juvenile justice system.

I want to thank those parents and students who have provided us with the information necessary to investigate and bring closure to this incident. Please encourage your child to let a teacher or administrator know if a situation exists that could ever place him or her and others in danger.

Only by working as a school community in partnership with parents, can we create and maintain the level of safety that we want for our children and that they certainly deserve.

## Sample Weapon at School Letter #2

Working in partnership with parents to provide open communication and ensure the safety of all students, I wanted to inform you of an event that occurred today. We received a report that a (*grade level*) grade student flashed a knife on the school bus this morning. Administrators took immediate action and called the (*name*) Police Department. We acted promptly to confiscate the weapon and begin disciplinary action.

The student was taken into custody by the Police Department. It is Board of Education policy that any student who brings a weapon on school property or to a school sponsored event faces disciplinary action.

Providing a safe and secure learning environment is of top priority for our school system and we take these incidents very seriously. Extensive security measures are in place to help us maintain a safe campus.

As parents, you can help. Please take this opportunity to speak to your child about the importance of school safety. While peer pressure is great at this age, we want to encourage students to feel comfortable reporting any information they may have that compromises their safety and the safety of others. Working together we can maintain an environment where students are free to focus on learning.

As always, I welcome your comments and questions. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you should have any concerns.

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### Sample Student Assault Letter #1

This letter is to inform you that a student assault occurred (*information regarding whether the assault/harassment took place on or off campus, and any other information that can be provided without violating a victim's confidentiality.*)

All of us will be feeling a variety of emotions, including shock, sadness, and anger. I want you to know that we, the (*name of school*) staff, care about the emotions our students may be experiencing.

Our Crisis Response Team has developed plans to respond to the emotional needs of students. (*Clarify what is being done, including grief counseling, classroom debriefing, referrals, etc. Also list the school support services and collaborating agencies that are available for the child/family.*) Law enforcement is currently investigating the case.

It is extremely stressful any time violence touches us. If your family has experienced a trauma or loss recently, this assault may trigger feelings about your situation. This is a normal experience. Please inform your child's (*teacher or counselor*) if there is additional information the school should be aware of so we can provide the support your child needs.

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## Sample Student Assault Letter #2

A student in (*teacher's name*) (*grade*) class was the victim of (*assault, molestation, attempted murder*) (*yesterday, today, over the weekend*).

(*Name of student*) is currently receiving care at (*medical center/hospital*). We are saddened by this tragic event. Your child's class had the opportunity to talk to (counselors, teachers, Crisis Response Team) about some of their concerns.

During this time, your child may be feeling confused and have a lot of questions about this situation. It is important to listen to your child and discuss his or her concerns. We have attached some information that you may find useful on how to help your child deal with this issue.

A special trust fund has been set up for (*name of student*) and her family to help defray medical expenses. If you would like to contribute, please contact (*provide details of financial institution*).

We will keep you informed on (*name of student*) progress and ask that you keep (*him or her*) in your thoughts and prayers. Please feel free to call the school office at if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your concern and support.

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### Sample Health Alert Letter #1

As you may already know, an outbreak of (*measles, head lice, meningitis etc.*) has occurred in (*our school, the district, the community*).

We are doing everything possible to protect the health of our students and limit the spread of (*measles, head lice, meningitis etc.*). (*Explain what the situation is and what steps are being taken*).

Our school (*and district*) nurses are staying informed and monitoring the situation every day.

I have attached some information about (*measles, head lice, meningitis, etc.*). If you would like more information, please call (*County Health, Community Information and Referral, etc.*).

Let me assure you that the health and well-being of our students is our top priority and we are doing everything possible to address the situation.

Please feel free to contact my office if you have any questions or concerns.

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## Sample Health Alert Letter #2

(*Name of school*) has not had any reported cases of community-acquired methicillin-resistant staphylococcus infection (CA-MRSA), an antibiotic-resistant type of *staph infection*, but we would like to share ways to help students reduce their risk of contracting the infection.

Several school districts in the region have reported serious cases of the infection, which is passed through person-to-person contact, and is highly resistant to antibiotics. MRSA infections usually begin with a skin infection, and can become serious or fatal if left untreated. While we most often hear of student athletes contracting MRSA, **all students** should take precautions.

The best way to prevent MRSA is to practice good personal hygiene and to avoid contact with another person's open skin lesions. Students should wash their hands often and thoroughly and avoid sharing personal items such as towels, soap, and clothing.

The National Athletic Trainers' Association has developed a list of 10 recommendations to prevent contracting MRSA, which are listed on the back of this letter. The school system provides safe and clean athletic facilities and equipment, and we follow all cleaning guidelines and procedures recommended by the National Athletic Trainers' Association.

The prevention of CA-MRSA requires a community effort so please take the time to read and observe prevention measures. If students notice any skin infection, such as pimples, pustules, or boils, which are abnormally red, painful, or have drainage, please have them checked by your family doctor. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the health department or your child's school nurse.

### • TIP

- Refer to vaccination programs available in your community and other related resources, if they apply.

## Sample Emergency Protocol Communications

These messages are for school secretaries or others who answer phones when word is out about a school that has gone into a School Safe Condition (for example, lockdown, shelter-in-place, evacuation, etc.)

- (*Name of school*) was placed in a lockdown at (*time*) at the request of the (*name*) Police Department due to an incident in the neighborhood. Police responded to reports of suspicious activity. We were given the all clear at (*time*), and returned to our normal school activities. No students or staff were in harm's way. Thank you for your call and concern.
- An attempted robbery that occurred at the convenience store near (*name of school*) resulted in the school being put in a shelter-in-place condition for approximately 25 minutes early this afternoon. The shelter-in-place means no one can leave the building, and all doors are locked preventing any access to the school. School activities go on as scheduled during this time. If the situation were to have been warranted, we would have gone into a lockdown. More information about today's incident will be shared in a communication to parents tonight.
- We apologize that we could not answer the phones at mid-morning. We were in a lockdown as recommended by police due to an incident involving a suspicious person with a weapon on the school's property. During lockdown procedures all persons inside the school move to a safe location, turn off all lights, and remain quiet until an all clear is given. The lockdown lasted approximately 10 minutes while police subdued the individual and took him into custody. We apologize if these events frightened you as a parent/guardian. Our first priority is to make sure all students and staff are safe. Thank you for your understanding.
- We apologize that we could not answer the phones for a period of time this afternoon. We were evacuated when smoke and fumes from an overheated cooler in the kitchen caused the fire alarms to be activated. (*Name*) Fire Department responded and used large fans to vent the building. We returned to school approximately 50 minutes after the initial evacuation. Students were grouped by classroom and teachers conducted some activities on the playfields during the evacuation period. We appreciate your support and concerns.

## Sample Emergency Communication #1

As we enter spring, I want to remind you of (*name of school district*) emergency communication procedures. Should an unexpected event, such as sudden severe weather, occur during the school day, our top priority is keeping your children safe.

In order to focus our attention on student safety during a district-wide emergency, communication efforts will be coordinated at the district level. Our internal communication system allows central administration to be continuously in touch with campuses. We urge parents to please avoid telephoning the school or district, as phone systems and the resources to operate them could be inaccessible during extreme situations.

In a true emergency, events happen fast and situations can vary from campus to campus. We will do our best to keep you informed in a timely manner, especially as it pertains to early or delayed dismissal times, transportation issues, and any other changes to your child's instructional day. Throughout the course of an emergency, we will use the following methods to communicate with you:

- **Facebook** ([www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/)): Messages will be posted as quickly as possible to our Facebook page. You do not have to sign up for Facebook to view these pages; however, followers will receive instant updates in their newsfeeds. We will update our Facebook page throughout any crisis.
- **Website** (*www.website address*): District-wide emergency messages and updates will be posted on the district home page as they develop.
- **Blackboard Connect or School Messenger** (email and telephone messages): We will provide updated information as needed to all parent and emergency contact telephone numbers and email addresses in the system. This may be utilized for specific campus or groups of campuses.
- **Local news media**: When appropriate, we will make information available to local television and radio stations and will enlist their assistance in communicating with our audiences.

Please remember that we work very hard to keep your children safe at school. In the event of severe weather or other emergency where conditions outside the school are unsafe, we will shelter our students and staff in place and avoid sending anyone outside of the building until the threat has passed.

During such emergencies, we urge you to avoid coming to the school until you are notified that dismissals have resumed. If you choose to do so, there may be significant delays in our ability to release individual students to parents, as our priority will be maintaining the safety of the overall campus population. When regular dismissal times or procedures are altered due to an emergency, we will have a student sign-out process in place for the safety of all concerned.

Every day we endeavor to stay focused on learning in a secure instructional environment; however, we are prepared for the unexpected. Planning ahead is our best safeguard. Thank you for partnering with us to keep our school safe.

## Sample Emergency Communication #2

The safety and well-being of our students and staff is a priority. Our goal is for all students to achieve high academic standards within a safe learning environment.

Because of recent events (*shootings, bomb threats, etc.*), we think it is important to remind parents and students about our policies to ensure a safe learning environment, and we ask that you review them with your children:

- (List policies on weapons, drugs, gang/hate group dress or behavior, and threats or intimidation, visitor's policies, etc.)

The school district (or school) has also provided for student safety with (name any new or upcoming programs or services that have been put in place). We will continue to evaluate and update our programs so that all students can enjoy a safe, positive school experience.

Our goal is to provide an educational program that honors diversity and academics and focuses on the needs of students. Thank you for your help and support of our efforts to accomplish this goal.

### Sample Emergency Communication #3

(*Name of school*) recently participated in a cooperative emergency crisis response drill with the (*name*) Police and Fire Departments. This drill was conducted to determine how a crisis situation might be handled should it occur on one of our campuses.

We will conduct other types of drills in the coming months. These drills are essential to implementing our Emergency Crisis Management Plan. Your child may come home and talk about (*describe the drill procedures*).

It is regrettable that we must plan and practice for such possible occurrences, but, in light of serious tragedies on other school campuses, we feel that such drills are essential for the safety of our children.

Working together we can ensure that the educational process is allowed to continue in the safe, uninterrupted environment that our children deserve.

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• **TIP**

- Consider communicating to parents and the school's neighbors before a drill or emergency exercise takes place, and post signs around the school to prevent undue alarm when the drill or exercise is underway.
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**Sample Drug Dog on Campus Letter:**

We want to partner with you for the safety of your child and are deeply committed to the safety of everyone on our campus. While our primary goal is to focus on learning, efforts are ongoing to provide the safest learning environment possible for every child at *(name of school)*.

As part of that effort we recently invited the *(name)* Police Department's K-9 Unit to visit our campus. K-9 dogs led by trained officers are available to visit schools and provide an added measure of safety.

As always, students do not come in contact with the dogs and strict measures are taken to maintain student safety and privacy.

We welcome this participation from the police and appreciate them helping us send a message that drugs and alcohol are not tolerated at *(name of school)*.

In addition, we maintain school safety through the use of school surveillance systems, additional school radios, and surveillance equipment on all school buses. We welcome your input as we strive to provide the safest learning environment possible at *(name of school)*.

Our administrators will be happy to speak with you if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for the opportunity to serve your children and for the support you provide.

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### Sample Misbehavior on the Bus Letter

I would like to make you aware of a recent situation and solicit your help as a partner in your child's safety. This week, four students behaved in a very inappropriate manner on the school bus. Disciplinary action has been taken and disciplinary protocol will be followed using school board policy.

At (*name of school*), we have very high standards of conduct that are expected of all students. The same code of conduct for the classroom applies to the buses as well.

Students should be reminded that all buses are equipped with surveillance cameras, and behavior is monitored closely.

Please encourage your child to report any behavior that could in any way compromise their safety or the safety of others on the bus. Working together, we can maintain a safe educational experience for your child. Join me in stressing to your children the importance of respecting themselves and each other.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call me or the transportation department.

## Developmental Stages and Children’s Responses to Grief

	Grief Reactions	Helpful Approaches
Ages 2 to 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confusion, agitation at night, frightening dreams, regression.</li> <li>• Child often understands that a profound event has occurred.</li> <li>• Repeated questioning.</li> <li>• Child’s understanding of death is limited.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple, honest words and phrases.</li> <li>• Reassurance.</li> <li>• Secure, loving environment.</li> <li>• Drawing, reading books, playing together.</li> <li>• Include in funeral rituals.</li> </ul>
Ages 5 to 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wants to understand about death in a concrete way, but thinks, “Won’t happen to me.”</li> <li>• Denial, anger, sorrow.</li> <li>• Generally distressed, disoriented, confused.</li> <li>• May behave as though nothing has happened.</li> <li>• Desire to conform with peers.</li> <li>• May ask questions repeatedly.</li> <li>• May need regular physical activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple, honest words and phrases.</li> <li>• Answer questions simply and honestly.</li> <li>• Look for confused thinking.</li> <li>• Offer physical outlets.</li> <li>• Reassure about future.</li> <li>• Drawings, reading books, playing together.</li> <li>• Include in funeral rituals.</li> </ul>
Ages 8 to 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shock, denial, anxiety, distress.</li> <li>• Façade of coping.</li> <li>• Finality of death understood.</li> <li>• Phobic behavior, morbid curiosity, peer conformity.</li> <li>• May need regular physical activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answer questions directly and honestly.</li> <li>• Reassure about future.</li> <li>• Create times to talk about feelings.</li> <li>• Offer physical outlets.</li> <li>• Reading.</li> <li>• Include in funeral plans and rituals.</li> </ul>

## Talking with Children About Death and Traumatic Situations

- Children do not have to know everything about death or a violent situation to come to some understanding about it.
- Be sensitive to children’s questions, taking cues from what they ask and their level of cognitive and emotional development.
- Do not talk children out of their feelings. Rather, permit them to talk about their feelings.
- Children fear death from either incomplete thinking or lack of knowledge.
- Children’s concerns do not always reach us through conversation. Sometimes they come obliquely through play.
- Play is serious business for children and the fundamental way for them to work on their feelings.
- Our most important role is as a silent observer of play, staying nearby, but unobtrusive. Always make yourself available for conversation if the play leads naturally to talk.
- Children need to grieve in their own ways.
  - Withdrawing or misbehaving
  - Shouting
  - Beating an inanimate object
  - Kicking a cardboard box
- Show your understanding and caring when sharing news of a death with children. “This is a very sad and difficult time for everyone. You may see me cry, act upset or even angry. I am not angry with you. I love you very much. It’s okay if you need to cry or be upset or angry also.”
- Talk at the children’s eye level. Touch or hold them when it is appropriate. Speak directly and avoid clichés. Avoid confusing terms such as *passed on*, *lost*, or *taken from us*. Children think in concrete terms. Words are not always necessary. Hugs and sitting close can say a lot.

- Explain the cause of death, why the body has stopped working. Children's fantasies may be far more frightening than reality. Do not be afraid to use the words *dead* or *dying*.

## Accidents Involving Students and Staff

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### Sample Accident Letter #1

Your child was involved in a motor vehicle accident today while riding the school bus. Emergency personnel were called to the scene and evaluated your child. Based on their findings, it was not deemed necessary to transport your child to the hospital at that time. Emergency personnel made the decision that your child could be safely transferred back to school.

Upon arrival to the school, your child received a “post-accident” screening by the (*school nurse/medic*). This screening was performed at (*time am/pm*), and was directed at identifying any immediate life-threatening conditions. This “post-accident” screening is not to be confused with a full medical evaluation by a physician. School personnel are communicating that at the time of the screening, your child did not complain of any pain or injury, nor demonstrated any indication that an emergency condition existed. Your child’s vital signs were within normal limits for his or her age at that time as well.

- I understand that my child has only received an initial evaluation by emergency personnel and a “post-accident” screening by the nurse/medic.
- I understand that a full medical evaluation HAS NOT been performed.
- I understand that if my child complains of pain, or I notice a change in my child’s condition, I need to immediately take my child to the nearest hospital emergency room.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Nurse/Medic

\_\_\_\_\_ AM/PM  
Time

### Sample School Bus Accident Letter #1

We wish to inform you of an accident that occurred this morning involving one of our school buses transporting students to (*name of school*). The incident occurred at (*provide location of accident*).

Four of the students were transported to Medical Center for observation after complaining of neck and back pain. Fortunately, these injuries were not life threatening, but we will always take the proper medical precautions to ensure the safety and well-being of our students. All of the other students were cleared by medical personnel on scene and allowed to board another bus to school. I also reported to the scene and checked on the students at the emergency room. All of the students were treated and released by noon.

The driver of the school bus was not injured. Local law enforcement is investigating the cause of this accident. We are also following our accident protocols as required by state statutes.

Our transportation department has a very safe driving record, and this was an isolated incident. Regardless, we want you to be aware as we partner with you for the safety of your child. Thank you for entrusting your child to our care. Please contact me should you have questions.

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## Sample School Bus Accident Letter #2

We want to inform you of an incident that occurred last evening as students were being transported home from a field trip to the Art Museum. At approximately 7:30 p.m., one of our school buses was involved in a traffic accident at (*provide location of accident*), when another vehicle slid on the wet pavement and struck the bus from behind.

Of the 16 students on board at the time of the accident, none appeared to be injured in any way and all were given the opportunity to be evaluated by medical personnel on the scene. Parents were notified and students were loaded on another bus and transported to school.

The driver of the school bus was not injured. Local law enforcement is investigating the cause of this accident. We are also following our accident protocols as required by state statutes.

Our transportation department has a very safe driving record, and this was an isolated incident. Regardless, we want you to be aware as we partner with you for the safety of your child. Thank you for entrusting your child to our care. Please contact me should you have questions.

## Announcements of Deaths (to Students, Staff and Families)

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### Sample Announcement to Parents

Our staff and students are saddened by news of the death of (*name of teacher*), a (*grade level*) grade teacher. This is a very sad day for the students, faculty, and colleagues of (*name of school*).

To provide support to our students and staff, we have asked the district's Crisis Response Team to assist our counselors in helping the (*children/students*) cope with this tragedy.

Thank you for your understanding at this difficult time. When we learn more information about visitation and funeral events, we will share it with you.

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### Sample Announcement to Students

Today we received the tragic news that one of our (*students or staff*), (*Name*), died last evening. (*Provide basic information about circumstances of the death.*)

When a loss like this occurs, we are likely to have different reactions and experience many different feelings. Some people will want to have a quiet time to remember (*name*), while others may want to talk to someone about how they are feeling. Some may want to continue working. We should be respectful to these different reactions and be supportive of each other.

It is stressful any time death touches us. This sudden death may be quite shocking to you and confuse you. For these reasons, we especially want you to know of our care and support.

The school day will remain on schedule, but teachers may delay regular activities to allow you to talk. Please let your teacher know if you need to talk to a counselor.

We will keep you updated as we receive further information.

### Sample Announcement to Staff

There are times when it is necessary to communicate news that is painful for all of us. During those times we must be prepared to support each other as we deal with the many feelings that we begin to experience. It is with great sorrow that I inform you that (*name*) at (*name of school*) passed away yesterday afternoon following a long illness.

Death can be difficult for us to understand, especially when it is sudden. We will all begin to feel different emotions: shock, sadness, confusion, and even some anger. What is most important is that we care for and support each other.

Sometimes students are affected by the death of someone important to them, and they may need to express their feelings. Please contact appropriate support service site staff if you notice a student who appears to be having more difficulty with (*his or her*) feelings than might be expected. We will keep you updated as more information becomes available.

## General Announcements (for Other Incidents)

### Sample Announcement/Letter (Threat) #1

At approximately (*time*), today, (*date*), a threat that we do not believe has any credibility was found (*location*). However, in an abundance of caution we treat all threats as if they are serious. Our campus resource officers were notified and we also immediately began our own investigation, which includes the review of security camera footage to identify the potential perpetrator.

Although this threat has no credibility, we wanted to make you aware of the situation and let you know it is safe to send your child to school. Making a threat on a public school can have serious legal and financial consequences for the perpetrator. At the very least, it disrupts the learning environment for the students and consumes staff resources.

Besides the possibility of criminal charges, the suspect and his or her family could be liable for repaying law enforcement for the cost incurred during the investigation. The district will impose the strongest penalty within our jurisdiction on the perpetrator including long-term suspension.

Please take a moment and remind your children that making any threat on a public school, business or other establishment is never a joke. The consequences can have a life-long impact.

If you or your child has any information, please share that with your child's school principal.

### Sample Announcement/Letter (Threat) #2

A (*name school*) student was arrested on campus today after making disturbing comments about another (*school, student, teacher, staff member*) to other students. The school staff and the (*name of locale*) Police have been in touch with the student's family and appropriate disciplinary action is taking place.

Recent events at schools in other states have heightened everyone's concern for the safety of students. I want to assure you that we take any type of threat seriously and have the full cooperation of the police department. That policy will not change.

I encourage you to talk with your child about the seriousness of threats and the importance of reporting suspicious activities, threats or disturbing information to a trusted adult. Students also need to be aware that law enforcement agencies are taking these threats very seriously and are pursuing prosecution even when such incidents are intended as pranks.

Please make sure your child is aware of these ramifications and that he or she understands hoaxes related to campus safety will not be tolerated.

I appreciate your continued support of a safe learning environment for our students.

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### Sample Announcement/Letter (Threat) #3

This letter is being sent home with students to provide you with accurate information, to discourage rumors, and to ask for your assistance. As you are aware, several recent threats of violence have occurred at local elementary and high schools in (*name district*) – mostly in the form of (*bomb threats, pellet guns, etc.*).

As with other threats, we have filed police reports and are working with law enforcement and staff members to assure all school campuses are safe.

We will not tolerate threats of any nature, especially when they continually disrupt the school day and result in countless hours of work to determine their validity and secure the safety of students and staff. In an effort to eliminate such disruptions, the district has instituted the following policies and procedures:

- (List policies put in place such as holding meetings with students at each school level, make-up time for school closures, rewards for catching the perpetrators, silent witness hotline and telephone bulletin board with updates on information.)

We need to come together as a community of students, parents, and school personnel to end this disruption of student learning. I urge you to talk to your children now and impress upon them the seriousness of threats in today's society. Ask them to notify you or school personnel should they hear of any planned or potential disruptive behavior.

The safety of our students and staff is our number one priority, and we will continue to be vigilant. Please feel free to call my office (telephone number) or call your local school principal if you have any questions or comments.

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#### Sample Announcement/Letter (Threat) #4

Early this morning, a bomb threat was called into the (*name of school*) office. Our office staff immediately responded with the appropriate protocols. All students and staff were evacuated and emergency personnel were contacted.

In abundance of caution and in order to give emergency responders time to ensure the building was safe, buses were called so students could be housed while the building was being searched. Emergency responders confirmed the building was safe and there was no credible threat. Students returned to class and resumed normal activities.

We appreciate the students, staff and parents for their calm, swift reaction to the evacuation. We also thank the (*name of locale*) Police Department and (*name of locale*) Fire Department for their immediate response and support.

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### Sample School Incident Letter #1

This letter is to inform you of an incident that occurred on our campus today. We want to make sure you have accurate information and dispel any rumors you may have heard about the incident.

*(Describe the incident in detail [i.e., weapon on campus, fight, threatening note or graffiti, etc.] and the steps that were taken to remedy it.)*

We take this incident seriously, and I ask your help in addressing the important issue of student safety. Please take a moment to review our school safety policies with your child.

- (List the safety policies and consequences for infractions.)

Please check your child's backpack each day and make sure that they bring to school only those items that belong here. For *(name of school)* to remain a safe haven for children, we must all work together – parents, staff, and community members – to provide the quality environment that our children deserve.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to call my office. Thank you for your support and assistance in keeping our campus safe for children.

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## Sample School Incident Letter #2

At 1:10 p.m. today, a security incident in close proximity to (*name of school*) resulted in the school being placed on lockdown. Law enforcement responded to a domestic situation at a residence two blocks from school.

As a precaution, the school was placed on lockdown for a brief period until police notified us that a perimeter was set up in the area. We then moved to a shelter-in-place in order to return to school activities. During the shelter-in-place, all students and staff remained inside for the rest of the day. All visitors were screened at the entrance prior to entering school.

The high school police liaison officer was stationed at the school during the shelter-in-place. We were given the all clear just prior to school dismissal time.

We wish to thank (*name of locale*) Police Department for their quick response and assistance during dismissal, and to parents for their patience. Our primary concern is always for the safety of our students and staff.

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## Sample School Incident (*in Neighboring School*) Letter #3

The tragic shooting incident at (*name of school district*) on (*date*) was horrific and incredibly frightening, especially for those who work in schools and have young children of their own. Our hearts go out to the parents and families affected by this tragedy. In times like these, it is important that we, as parents and educators, monitor our children's reactions, and gauge our response accordingly.

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) provides the following tips to help children deal with the aftermath of this tragedy.

- Provide a developmentally appropriate, clear, and straightforward explanation of the event.
- Return to normalcy and routine to the best extent possible while maintaining flexibility.
- Let children know that it's okay to feel upset or angry.
- Be a good listener and observer.

- Provide various ways for children to express emotion, such as through journaling, letter writing, talking, making a collage, or music.
- Focus on resiliency as well as the compassion of others.

The NASP has developed a resource for addressing violence titled *Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers*. Additional information can also be found at [www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org).

It is important to keep in mind that an event like this is rare and that schools are one of the safest places for children and youth during the school day. Should you choose to talk with your children about these events, it may help to emphasize that schools are safe places and that all schools conduct drills to ensure safety.

Rest assured that safety is our first priority. Should families need further information or resources, please contact your school principal. District counselors remain available for any student in need of assistance. Thank you for your support.

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#### Sample School Incident Message #4

This past weekend, I was informed by the (*name*) Police Department that one of our social studies teachers and girls' soccer coach was arrested on allegations of taking pictures of students without consent. Mr. (*name*) has resigned his position.

However, if you or your student has information regarding this investigation, we encourage you to call (*name*) Police Department at (*number*). We are committed to the safety of our students and expect all staff to adhere to the highest ethical practices and conduct. We will not tolerate behaviors that compromise the safety of our children. Thank you.

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# Appendix: Forms and Checklists

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## Evaluation of Crisis Intervention Team Response

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The Crisis Response (or Intervention) Team (CRT) seeks your input to help assess the effectiveness of the intervention during the recent crisis at your school. Please take a few minutes to complete this form and return it to the Crisis Response Team Coordinator.

Please check the response that most closely reflects your evaluation of the following:

**Speed of CRT's response to the crisis:**

- Very delayed
- Adequate
- Very timely

**Comprehensiveness of CRT's response:**

- Very delayed
- Adequate
- Very timely

**Effectiveness of team's response in meeting students' needs:**

- Very delayed
- Adequate
- Very timely

**Assistance to teachers in the classroom:**

- Not supportive
- Adequate
- Very supportive

**Quality of communication with the school faculty and staff:**

- Not informative
- Adequate
- Very explanatory

**Support and guidance to individual teachers and staff:**

- Ineffectual
- Adequate
- Very empathetic

**Assistance to the administrative staff:**

- Limited
- Adequate
- Very comprehensive

**Amount of time allocated for intervention:**

- Insufficient
- Adequate
- Very sufficient

**Support to families in need:**

- Lacking
- Adequate
- Outstanding

**Communication to parents:**

- Minimal
- Adequate
- Thorough

**Check the adjectives which best describe the students' reactions to the CRT's intervention:**

- |                                    |                                     |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Angry     | <input type="checkbox"/> Apathetic  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Negative  | <input type="checkbox"/> Ambivalent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Receptive | <input type="checkbox"/> Relieved   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grateful  | <input type="checkbox"/> Hostile    |

Please describe any significant reactions that the students had to the CRT intervention that should be considered in future interventions.

Please comment on any aspects of the intervention that you found particularly helpful or areas that you think should be modified.

## Crisis Meeting (Debrief) Agenda

During an initial briefing with staff about the crisis, the following specific agenda items will help in the review process:

- **Situation Report**
  - What appears to have happened?
    - Confirm facts (when, immediate known consequences, likely consequences).
    - Define the scope of proposed situation.
- **Initial Response Status**
  - What is being done, why, and by whom?
  - What is the likely implementation time and hoped-for results?
- **Initial Communication Status**
  - Who knows and who needs to know immediately and later?
  - What are the 3 to 5 key messages to share with parents, media, and community?
- **Short-term Response Requirements**
  - What must be done in the next several hours and how?
    - Delegate crisis communication responsibilities.
  - What human and material resources are available or needed?
- **Short-term Communication Process**
  - Staff, faculty, students, families, others?
- **Next Meeting**
  - Establish next debriefing or crisis response assessment meetings.
  - To maximize time, establish key status report information needed and

stick to this agenda. Use part of the meeting to freely discuss crisis, but limit or curtail unsubstantiated rumors or information sharing.

## References

- Apache Junction School District, Apache Junction, AZ
- Bloomington Public Schools, Bloomington, MN
- Cave Creek School District, Cave Creek, AZ
- Chandler (School District, Chandler, AZ
- Charles County Public Schools, La Plata, MD
- Deer Valley Unified School District, Phoenix, AZ
- Evergreen School District, San Jose, CA
- Glendale Union High School District, Glendale, AZ
- Mesa Public Schools, Mesa, AZ
- Milford School District, Milford, DE
- Mustang Public Schools, Mustang, OK
- Park Hill School District, Park Hill, MO
- Pitt County Schools, Greenville, NC
- Poudre School District, Fort Collins, CO