



# CSPV SCHOOL VIOLENCE FACT SHEET

FS-SV09B

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## Recommendations for Safe School Plans

School Safety planning is an endeavor that all schools and districts should participate in as emergency or crisis situations can arise at any time and without warning. The best plans are those that address a wide range of safety, security and emergency management issues. They should be reviewed and updated often, and involve the community, such as parents, law enforcement and other emergency services, as well as mental health professionals. Although each school or district should have their own personalized comprehensive School Safety plan, below are recommended elements of successful School Safety plans.

### Campus Access and Control

- Control campus access by limiting the number of entry points
- Clearly define campus perimeters with appropriate landscaping and fencing
- Remove posters and student decorations from window glass to enhance supervision
- Establish uniform visitor screening procedures
- Post appropriate directional signs on the campus, clearly marking entrances, exits and visitor entry
- Require picture identification cards for each student and staff member
- Carefully manage and monitor hall passes
- Clearly separate and segregate mixed vehicular, school bus and pedestrian traffic

### Administrative Leadership

- Mandate crime reporting and tracking
- Include school safety in the mission statement and on the educational agenda so that it remains a priority
- Develop a comprehensive, system-wide safe school plan
- Disseminate a summary of local, state and federal laws pertaining to school disorder
- Establish a state of the art "Emergency Operation Communications Center"
- Develop a clear job description of duties and responsibilities for school resource officers
- Establish an emergency/crisis response plan
- Specifically assign roles and responsibilities concerning school safety and security
- Work with administration to expand the network of alternative programs for troubled youth
- Establish a district-wide restitution and community service program
- Recognize the politics of safe schools by incorporating community leaders and other officials in planning decisions
- Establish good management practices by developing coalitions that include students and parents
- Conduct an annual review of safety plans and procedures
- Promote crime prevention through school/campus design
- Establish two-way communication between the main office and each classroom
- Identify and track repeat student offenders
- Provide close supervision and remedial training for habitual student offenders
- Carefully screen potential new employees by using background checks and other measures
- Conduct periodic joint meetings of all school staff and faculty, promoting unity and uniformity in school policies and programs
- Utilize existing technologies that promote crime control and prevention
- Adopt an "all hazards" approach in the emergency/crisis response plan

### School Climate

- Make the campus safe and welcoming
- Develop a graffiti and community clean-up program
- Create a climate of school pride and ownership
- Promote positive multi-cultural interaction and understanding
- Establish a diverse system of extracurricular programs

## Student Behavior and Management

- Review the student handbook with students at least annually
- Develop and enforce a school dress code
- Review and update discipline and weapon possession policies
- Provide adequate adult supervision during regular school hours and at after-school functions
- Limit opportunities for the transport and storing of contraband
- Revoke parking privileges of students who consistently break rules and policies
- Add "hard looks" and "stare downs" as actionable offenses to the student code of conduct
- Train students to take responsibility for their own safety
- Conduct emergency drills regularly

## Staff Training

- Conduct annual school safety training programs for all faculty and staff
- Establish an active school resource officer training program
- Provide teacher training in behavior management
- Establish professional development programs for campus supervisors and student personnel workers
- Establish a safe and effective physical restraint policy for unruly students

## Student Involvement

- Create an active student component through the use of after-school programs and extra-curricular activities
- Implement a peer counseling and peer mediation program at every school site
- Incorporate life skills curricula
- Create a student advisory council that can make recommendations to faculty and staff
- Develop a student crime prevention program
- Consider teen court as an option for dealing with extremely problematic students

## Building Community Partnerships

- Identify and utilize community resources
- Enhance interagency cooperation by creating a partnership among youth-serving professionals
- Seek intensive community support and involvement in making the trip to (and from) school safe for all students and faculty
- Establish close partnerships with local law enforcement and first responders
- Closely supervise problem students across agencies
- Provide comprehensive student services
- Create and enforce information sharing agreements among police and other first responders
- Establish close ties with a probation officer for students on probation

School Safety Plans should be reviewed annually with all school staff. Paper copies of the plans should be organized in such a way that staff can easily locate specific sections during a crisis situation (e.g. color coded, tabbed), and stored in several locations throughout the school, along with an updated student roster and building layout. In addition, just as schools practice fire drills, they should practice components of their safety plans with personnel from emergency services.

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### References:

Dorn, Mike; Thomas, Gregory; Wong, Marleen and Sonayia Shepard. (2004). *Jane's Safe School Planning Guide for All Hazards*. Alexandria, VA: Jane's Information Group

Stephens, R.D. (1998). Safe School Planning. In D.S. Elliott, B. Hamburg, & K.R. Williams (Editors), *Violence in American Schools: A New Perspective*, (pp.253-289). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

United States Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools. 2007. *Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities*. Jessup, MD: Education Publications Center.