KEEPING OUR SCHOOLS SAFE:

A Protocol for Violence Prevention and Crisis Response in New Brunswick Schools

New Nouveau **Brunswick**

Department of Education

Preface

The New Brunswick Department of Education Student Services Unit (Anglophone) struck a provincial committee in the fall of 1999 to address all aspects of violence prevention and crisis response in the schools. The Committee determined its mandate to address the problem from three perspectives:

1. Prevention measures: including anti-bullying programs and suicide prevention programs

2. Intervention measures: including the development of protocols for response to threats of violence in schools

3. Postvention measures: including defusing and debriefing responses to schools which have experienced a traumatic event

The incidents and intensity of violence in schools have escalated in the last several years. The Department of Education wanted to ensure that every school will be prepared and equipped to act on behalf of the safety and security of students and staff in the event of a crisis.

It is the belief of the Department of Education that

> "no plan conceived will ever be perfect and cover all situations equally well, but the absence of a plan is often the cause of devastating results."
>
> (Peterson and Straub 1992)

Accordingly, the Department of Education endeavoured to develop a protocol which could be readily adapted to a variety of threatening events, and could be easily implemented at a school level, with district support. The plan, likely to be adopted provincially, will thus enable schools to offer mutual support within districts and among all districts in the province in the event of large-scale incidents.

The following protocol was developed with input from provincial emergency services providers. The committee wishes to thank the following persons for their guidance and input:

Ron Akerley, 911

Mike Connolly, Policing Services

Brian Griffiths, RCMP

Monique LeBlanc, Solicitor General

Eden McAuley, Supply and Services

Ginette Pettipas-Taylor, RCMP Victim Services

Randy Robinson, EMO

Norman Thibodeau, Fire Marshall's Office

Committee Members

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Juanita Mureika, Consultant for School Psychology, Department of Education, Committee Chair

Defining Threatening Behaviours

A number of behaviours can be potentially dangerous to students and staffs in schools. Some of these are personally threatening to the student involved and to no one else (e.g. suicide attempts), while other behaviours implicate other students, staff members and/or the entire school. Clearly, the first approach towards these behaviours is prevention, which is the focus of many of the suggestions in this document.

If and when incidents do occur, responses to threatening behaviours must be appropriate to the level of the threat and also sensitive to the needs of the offender, as well as the safety and security of others in the school. Accordingly, several avenues of response are described, each based on an initial assessment of the level of threat.

Finally, in the event that a traumatic incident does occur, it is essential that schools have plans and resources available to respond to students' and staffs' reactions. Development and implementation of crisis events response teams are encouraged for each school and district. These teams are discussed in the final portion of this document.

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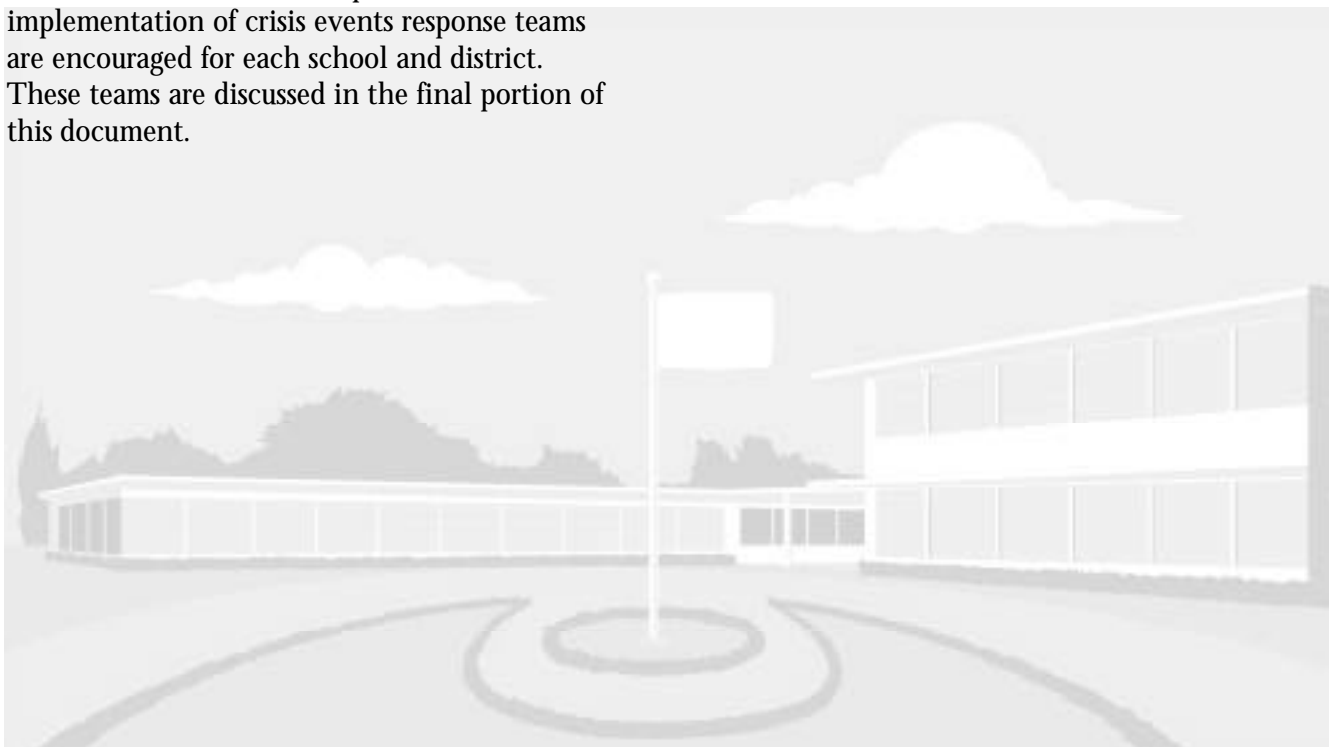
"To be effective, security must be woven into everyday school activities, be an integral part of decision making and policy development, and be part of the school curriculum."

(Foust 1999)

This section does not provide every possible component of a school violence-prevention plan. Nor should it be assumed that, if a school implements all of these options, the potential for violence will be totally eliminated. However, the suggestions below represent best practices recommended by crisis response experts and in the literature.

Physical Safeguards

◗ Limit access to school property.

◗ Lock all unmonitored entrances.

◗ Require all visitors to check in at the office.

◗ Issue distinct identification for visitors, staff and students.

◗ Monitor schoolyard perimeters and hallways.

◗ Provide communication systems for staff members who monitor school activities.

◗ Provide a regular police presence in your school, either through the regional school police program or through the "Adopt a School" program of the RCMP.

◗ Teachers should consider leaving doors to the hallway open during classes. This allows passers-by to alert others if a problem situation develops.

◗ Teachers should consider using a teacher buddy system in which each teacher is paired with another teacher across the hall. The paired teachers would routinely check on each other.

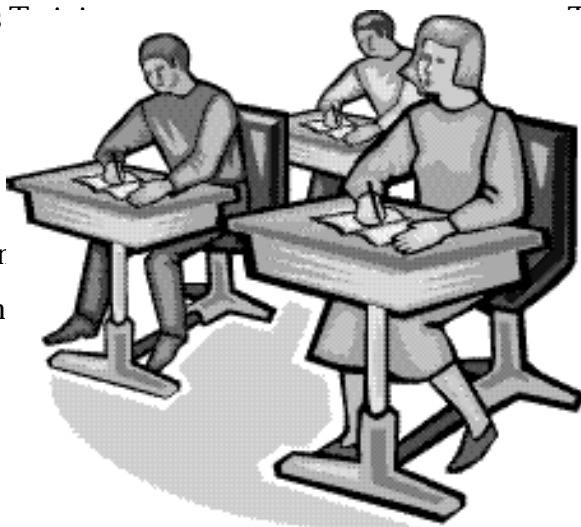◗ If weapons are a concern, consider prohibiting book bags and coats in the classroom.

◗ Each classroom should have a system for two-way communication with the office. For classrooms with no phone or intercom, schools may wish to consider purchasing a cell phone to ensure communication, or they may want to install an emergency alarm button on the teacher's desk.

◗ Conduct regular safety audits of school facilities and grounds.

Implement School Wide Violence Prevention Programs

◗ Teachers, parents and students need to be made aware of the importance of reporting mutterings and whispers about any potential confrontation. Sensitivity to such rumours can provide an early warning sign. A safe school is everyone's responsibility.

◗ Staff should receive information about potentially violent students on a need-to-know basis.

◗ Provide awareness and training to staff on all aspects of the violence-response plan, especially prevention. Training modules include the following examples:

  ◗ Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training

  ◗ Coping with Noncompliance in the Classroom

  ◗ General Classroom Behaviour Management Techniques

- Teacher Effectiveness Training
- Peer Mediation and Conflict Resolution
- Social Skills Programs
- Anti-Bullying Programs
- Suicide Awareness and Prevention Programs
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse Awareness Programs
- Individual tutoring and mentoring programs

Create a Safe and Caring School Through a Positive School Culture

- Involve parents. Invite and be receptive to parental involvement, especially the parents of high-risk students. Make parents feel welcome in your school.

- Involve students. Mobilize student leadership to address and improve the school culture (e.g. Students Against Racism, Students Against Drunk Driving).

- Focus on academic achievement with adequate resources and programs to ensure that all students can achieve academically. Students who do not receive the support that they need often compensate through disruptive behaviour.

- Develop close links to the community, including being receptive to district and community support services (police, psychologists, social workers, probation officers, public health nurses, etc.).

- Promote positive relationships among students and staff through shared recreational activities, posting student work in the hallways, encouraging both staff and students to help those who need it. Make a special effort to draw out isolated, higher-risk individuals.

- Treat all individuals with respect, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation, etc. Promote and expect mutual regard as the basis for student/staff relationships.

- Ensure that the school is clean and well maintained. The physical condition of the building has an impact on attitudes and behaviour.

- Involve parents, community and students in developing school-wide disciplinary policy.

- Ensure that teachers and administration are consistent in handling student misbehaviour.

- Utilize a large variety of discipline options, including a range of consequences appropriate to the students' misbehaviour.

Individual Interventions for Students at Risk of Violent Behaviour

- Know the early warning signs of potentially violent behaviour (see Appendix C) and intervene proactively through individual behaviour plans, counselling and/or referral to district and community support services as needed.

- Screen for potential learning difficulties that may be contributing to misbehaviour and intervene as needed.

- Try to provide a mentoring relationship for at-risk students, particularly those with attachment difficulties (problems forming trusting relationships with others). A positive and meaningful relationship with an adult dramatically reduces the potential for violence and can have a significant impact on a student's eventual outcome.

- In consultation with support personnel (guidance, behaviour mentors, psychologists,

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social workers), develop intervention plans for high-risk students.

◗ Identify competencies (strengths) of at-risk students, using such techniques as "needs webs" (Worth, Freedom, Fun, Belonging). Use a mentor or counsellor to assist students in identifying strengths and interests. Develop and provide opportunities at school to pursue individual competencies.

◗ Provide career counselling. Research has shown that the number one protective factor keeping conduct-disordered students from an adult life of crime and/or anti-social behaviour is whether or not they are employed after leaving school. Exploring career options with an at-risk student is extremely important. For academically unsuccessful and/or low-functioning, at-risk youth, programs that include a work/study option at the secondary level are essential.

◗ Information from psychological assessments can help to develop intervention plans. This information can identify realistic expectations based on cognitive development, the individual learning profile and social/emotional factors which affect behaviour.

◗ Placement in Alternate Education Programs may be required for certain cases. The emphasis should always be on reintegration into the regular stream.

◗ Referral for substance-abuse counselling should be initiated, as needed.

◗ Individual counselling, therapy and/or medical consultations should be facilitated, as needed.

◗ All weapons violations should be reported immediately to the police. Guns and knives at school are criminal offences.

◗ Student conduct codes should include the requirement that a teacher or principal be notified when a weapon is suspected. Discussions about the importance of a safe school and the students' responsibilities are needed yearly in order to counteract the "don't be a snitch" philosophy of many intruders.

Planning Considerations

◗ It is essential that each school have a team responsible for implementing this protocol.

◗ Involve community partners, especially police and fire departments, in the development of your school plan.

◗ Involve the SPAC members in both the development of your school plan and in provision of resources to fulfil the plan.

◗ Ensure that your plan is updated annually and practised regularly and that adequate training is provided.

◗ Make sure that your "school evacuation plan" has selected an available site for evacuation. Busing connections to the evacuation site will have to be part of this plan.

◗ If a practice is scheduled for a "secure-the-building drill," ensure that parents and students are informed of the day of the drill ahead of time, without giving the actual time. Provide developmentally appropriate explanations for the drill. Always provide debriefing (through classroom discussions) after such a drill has taken place.

◗ Ensure that fire and police departments in your area have recent copies of the floor plans of your school and that master keys are easily accessible.

◗ Keep hallways clear and free of obstructions, as required by the Fire Marshall.

◗ Equip the school with an emergency kit, as described below, and, if possible, duplicate the contents in an outside storage area.

◗ Ensure that the principal has access to a cell phone which can be dedicated for use in emergency situations.

◗ Ensure that appropriate plans have been made for evacuating and keeping safe students with disabilities which prohibit them from moving to safety independently.

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Risk Assessment

When a threatening behaviour is noted, an assessment of the risk should be completed by the principal and the student services/school team. The answers to four questions should provide the information needed to direct the appropriate response:

1. Is there a well-defined plan for violence?

2. Are the resources required to carry out the plan available to the offender?

3. By what method of communication did the staff become aware of the plan?

4. Is there a prior history of violence/aggression with this offender?

In each instance, the fact that a threat has been detected and investigated should be shared with the Student Services Supervisor in the district, or the individual who maintains responsibility for students who pose behavioural problems in the schools. The Director of Education and/or Superintendent will be kept informed of any difficult situations by the Student Services Supervisor.

Response Procedures

Low-Risk Threat

Some threats will be considered worrisome, but will not require immediate action. For example, a teacher might find a note written by a student which contains thoughts of harm to self or others. The student has no past history of emotional problems, and the note is vague in terms of any intent. In instances of this sort, the classroom teacher, with the support of the student services/school-based team, would monitor the behaviour of the student to determine the extent and seriousness of the concern. Some in-school counselling might be indicated. The Student Services Supervisor may

be notified that the school has some concern about the given student.

Moderate-Risk Threat

Some threats are more pervasive in nature and therefore require more intervention than is possible in the regular classroom. For example, a student might have a history of aggression, there might be sudden family problems in the student's life, or there may be suspicion of drug or alcohol involvement. Although there may be no evident plan to harm self or others, there is concern about the potential for violence. In such cases, the school-based/student services team, in conjunction with the classroom teacher, would likely initiate a referral to an outside agency for additional support. These referrals may be made through the Student Services Supervisor, principal or guidance counsellor, or may be directed to support services, such as psychologists, behaviour mentors, social workers, Mental Health, or Child Protection. Included in the intervention would be the development of a plan for the student and ongoing monitoring of the student's progress by school and agencies involved.

Hish-Risk Threat

Some threats will require an immediate intervention to ensure the safety of the student and/or the school. This type of threat includes such examples as a student indicating an intention to commit suicide; a student threatening to harm another student with a weapon; a student making specific threats against staff. In any of these instances, allowing the student to stay at school might offer the opportunity to carry out the threat and do harm.
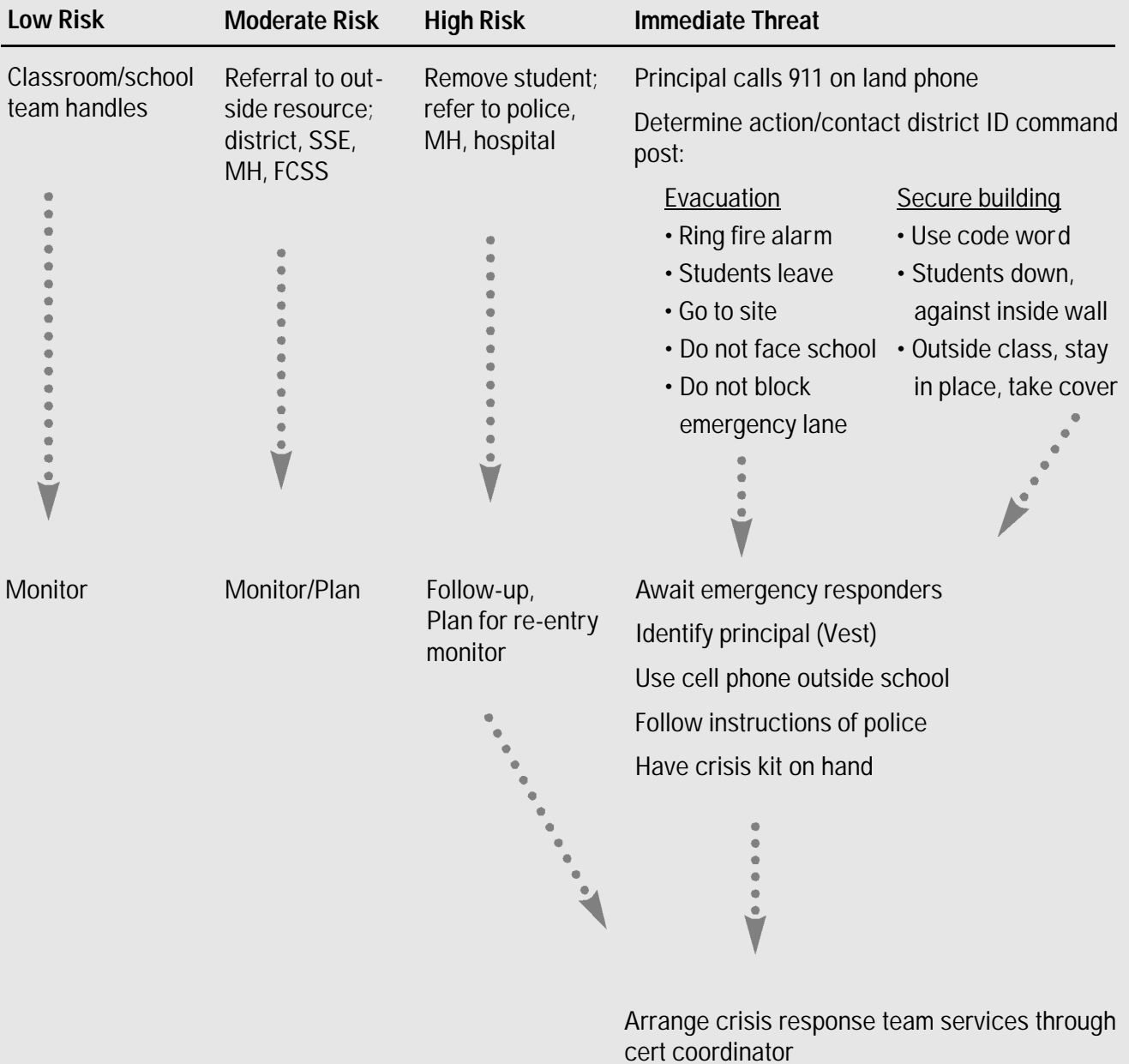
Following are specific steps to include in the case of a high-risk student:

1. Stabilize the situation.

◗ Do not leave the student alone under any circumstances.

◗ Calmly determine if the student has a weapon in his possession.

Threatening Behavior Noted

* Assessment of Risk by Principal and Student Services/School Team
(Questions: Plan, Resources, Communication Method, Prior History)
* Student Services Supervisor/Cert Coordinator Contacted
* Director of Education Notified

Low Risk	Moderate Risk	High Risk	Immediate Threat
Classroom/school team handles	Referral to out-side resource; district, SSE, MH, FCSS	Remove student; refer to police, MH, hospital	Principal calls 911 on land phone Determine action/contact district ID command post:

Evacuation
- Ring fire alarm
- Students leave
- Go to site
- Do not face school
- Do not block emergency lane

Secure building
- Use code word
- Students down, against inside wall
- Outside class, stay in place, take cover

Low Risk	Moderate Risk	High Risk	Immediate Threat
Monitor	Monitor/Plan	Follow-up, Plan for re-entry monitor	Await emergency responders Identify principal (Vest) Use cell phone outside school Follow instructions of police Have crisis kit on hand

Arrange crisis response team services through cert coordinator

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- If possible, remove the weapon - do NOT struggle with the student.
- Inform administration, if not already done.
- Calmly move student to a safe place away from other students, or remove the other students.

2. Assess risk / take action.

- Interview the student regarding the cause of the upset, determine the appropriate course of action and refer accordingly.
- NOTE: If parents are thought to be the perpetrators, they are NOT notified if child abuse is suspected as it may interfere with police or child protection investigations. New Brunswick has a mandatory reporting law for ALL individuals who suspect child abuse, and the Department of Health and Community Services must receive these reports directly and without delay(see Family Services Act, Part III, Subsection 30(3), Subsection 30(10) and Subsection 31(2.1).
- Notify parents immediately and encourage access of services through the appropriate agency (e.g. Mental Health/ emergency services).
- NOTE: Section 264.1(1) of the Criminal Code makes uttering threats an offence. This behaviour, or any more direct attack on another person, MUST be reported to the police.

3. Inform district staff.

- If the threat is directed towards others, the Student Services Supervisor/Director/Superintendent would be notified immediately of the concern.

4. Followup.

- Monitor the student's progress through communication with referral agencies and parents.
- Plan together for reintegration of the student when the student is ready to return to school.
- Evaluate procedures taken to ensure that the reintegration plan meets the student's needs, and, if it does not, modify the plan.

Immediate Threat

Two basic responses to threats which place the school population in imminent danger are evacuation and secur e the building. The first, evacuation , would be used in the event that the school becomes unsafe (i.e. in the case of a bomb threat or a fire). *Keep in mind that, despite recent concerns over weapons and violence in schools, the single greatest threat to school safety is an uncontrolled fire.* The second, secur e the building, would be used in the event that the presence of an intruder in the school makes it dangerous for the students and staff to leave; gunfire is heard in the building or on the school grounds; or in the event of a chemical spill or natural disaster.

Clearly, the decision to declare either an evacuation or a secure the building situation requires quick response by the principal and immediate notification of emergency services and Student Services Supervisor/Director of Education/Superintendent. The actions expected of staff and students must be ones which have been planned and rehearsed so that they move appropriately and immediately on the pre-arranged signal, and stay in place until the "all clear" is sounded.

Evacuation Procedures

- When notifying police about a firearm incident, consider using a prearranged code word. Otherwise, parental monitoring of the police radio channels could result in the school being flooded by calls from parents or in their coming to the school.
- It is essential that schools have identified a usable and accessible evacuation site, and developed plans for moving students to that site. Remember that special-needs students may need special accommodations.
- It is advisable to have students exit the schools through side doors rather than the front door, if possible, and proceed immediately to the alternate site.
- Likely little time will be available for consultation with other team members/student

services staff for this response, and therefore the principal* must act quickly.

- NOTE: Owing to the enormous responsibility placed on a principal in an emergency, it is advisable to have at least one other person on staff trained to act in place of the principal in the event that the principal is not available, or to assist the principal with the tasks.

- The first call should go to 911, on a land phone, to ensure that the appropriate information is conveyed to emergency service providers. It is important to know that the 911 lines are now connected to all emergency services within the region, and, if the call is made on a land phone, the school is immediately identifiable by 911, even if the call cannot be completed. A call made from a cell phone cannot be traced by 911! A dedicated cell phone number where the principal can be reached outside of the building should be given to the 911 operator. As much as possible, this dedicated line should be reserved for incoming calls only.
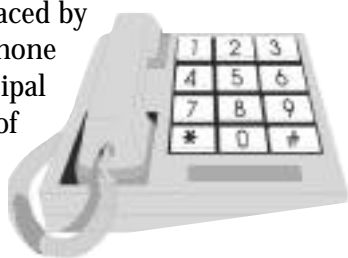
- The fire alarm should be sounded to move students to safety immediately. If the students are to remain adjacent to the school, they should face away from the building if there is a risk of explosion to avoid being hurt by any flying debris from the building. They should also be stationed away from the emergency lanes so that response vehicles have access to the school. If the students are to be moved to an evacuation site, they should be directed to proceed there immediately, or wait for busing. If students are bused to another location, parents will need to be notified of the new location.

- Calls to district office to notify officials of the situation should follow the 911 call.

- Each school should have an identified "command centre" which can be set up quickly in the event that evacuation of the school is necessary. This site might be the local fire, police or town/community centre.

- The principal should leave the school with the school's emergency kit immediately after the 911 call. This kit should contain the dedicated cell phone, floor plans of the school with hazards identified, current bus lists, keys to open all doors in the school, class lists with phone numbers of parents, and a fluorescent vest to identify the principal to the emergency workers when they arrive. It is recommended that a duplicate emergency kit be kept in an accessible, secure alternate site in case it is not possible to retrieve the kit from the school.

- Once emergency crews arrive, the principal should identify him/herself to the site commander (likely police) and follow the instructions given.

- No one should re-enter the school until the "all clear" signal is given by the emergency workers to the principal.

- The Director of Education/Superintendent should be notified when the emergency is over, and a report completed for the Director of Education/ Superintendent.

- The Co-ordinator of the Crisis Events Response Team should offer defusing/ debriefing services for students and staff.

Secure-the-Building Procedures

Likely little time will be available for consultation with other team members/student services staff for this response, and therefore the principal must act quickly.

- The principal must call 911 on a land phone and notify emergency services of the nature of the emergency. If the call is not made on a land phone, the 911 operator cannot trace the call if it is not completed. Subsequent calls can be made from a dedicated cell phone, the number of which is given to the 911 operator at the time of the first call so that follow-up contact can be made.

- An agreed-upon signal must be given to the students and staff over the intercom to alert them to begin appropriate protective

measures. Note: The importance of planning and practice on these procedures cannot be underestimated. Lives could be lost if students and staff do not know how to respond to keep themselves safe.

◗ Students and staff in classrooms should remain in the rooms, lock the doors, and move away from windows.

◗ Students and staff who are not in the classroom, whether within the school building and halls or outside on school grounds, should take cover in the nearest safe place.

◗ The Director of Education/Superintendent must be advised of the nature of the emergency. A command post should be established to facilitate co-ordination, contacts with parents and with the media.

◗ Students and staff should stay in place until the agreed upon "all clear" signal is given, on the command of the emergency services site co-ordinator.

◗ A report should be made by the principal to the Director of Education/ Superintendent.

◗ The Co-ordinator of the Crisis Events Response Team should provide defusing/ debriefing services for students and staff.

Additional Cautions

Adressing Students' Fears

The prospect of an emergency and potentially life-threatening event happening at school is certainly frightening for both staff and students. In preparing students to respond appropriately for their own protection, consideration must also be given to the potential impact that the practice itself can have on students. Accordingly, the following precautions are recommended:

◗ Prior to practising an emergency response, students should be informed about the reasons why such a response might be needed; for example, suggest that teachers brainstorm with their classes some reasons why they might need to protect themselves from danger

outside of the school or inside of the school. Classroom discussion can ensure that the presentation of the information is developmentally appropriate, and can emanate from what students are already familiar and comfortable with - fire drills, for example.

◗ Parents should be informed that the school has a plan for response to dangers both inside and outside of the school, and that, in order to ensure the safety of the students, it is essential that the plan be practised. As with fire drills, the plan should be practised a minimum of 4 times throughout the school year.

◗ Parents and students should be notified in advance of a practice drill, especially for secure-the-school procedures. In the notification, the week and/or day can be mentioned, but not the exact time of the drill.

◗ In the event of a real response,

-acknowledge the students' fears, expressed and implied

-provide students with accurate information to dispel rumours

-tell the students that you believe the school is safe and have taken appropriate precautions

-monitor students who continue to express fear and provide individual support if indicated

The best, safest place for the students is the school. If they go home, they will not have the support of professionals and their peers. Their fears may grow in intensity to the point that they may not want to return to school. Their recovery time from the traumatic event will be prolonged.
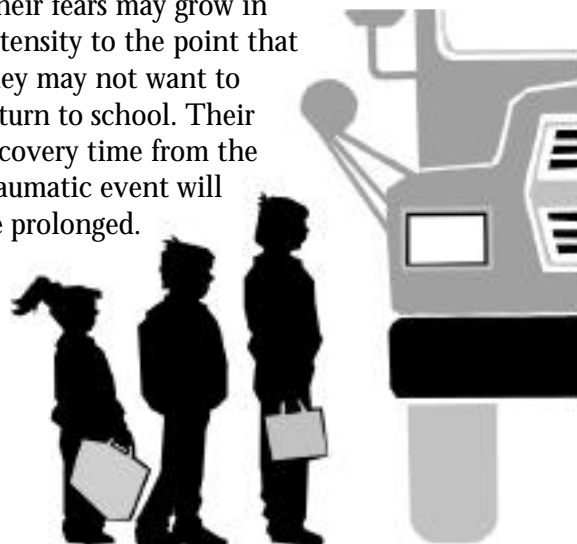
Addressing Parents' Concerns

It is important to have a plan for responding to parents in the event of an emergency.

◗ The plan should include contacting parents if students have to be moved to an evacuation site, have to be sent home early (non-storm related) or following a secure-the-building procedure. Such a plan should involve the use of a telephone tree with parents' work and home phone numbers.

◗ Respond to parents who arrive on the scene following an emergency. This would include arranging a designated site for the parents to go and designating personnel to talk to parents as they arrive and to answer questions.

◗ A sign-out system needs to be in place to keep track of students who are picked up by parents and removed from school.

◗ Both on-site defusing and counselling services, as well as follow-up debriefing services for parents, should be provided.

Dealing with the Media

It is important that there be a designated spokesperson who is familiar with media and comfortable with interviews. In the event of a serious crisis, the following guidelines are advised:

◗ Only one person should speak for the district, likely the Director of Education / Superintendent. If the principal is contacted directly, he/she should refer the press to the spokesperson and advise that updates will be coming only from that source.

◗ Requests for interviews should be responded to within a reasonable time; however, the interviews should be scheduled at the spokesperson's discretion.

◗ Students are NOT to be interviewed at the school. The school has no control over contacts the media may make with students off school property.

◗ Staff should be interviewed only with the Director of Education / Superintendent's authorization.

◗ Media should not be invited into the school or onto school property without proper authorization.

◗ NOTE: If the police are actively involved in the incident, they should also be the spokespersons as far as the investigation is concerned. District office or school media spokespersons must restrict their comments to aspects of the incident NOT related to criminal investigations. Before any press releases are made, they should be shared with other agencies actively involved, to ensure that the statement is accurate and will not interfere with their investigations.

◗ Comments made by the spokesperson should be restricted to the process being followed and not to any specific details of the incident.

Rights with the Media*

◗ the right to say "no" to an interview or a particular question

◗ the right to refuse an interview with a specific reporter, even if the interviewee has granted interviews to other reporters

◗ the right to avoid a press conference atmosphere and speak to only one reporter at a time

◗ the right to refrain from answering any questions that make the interviewee uncomfortable or that are felt to be inappropriate

◗ the right to demand a retraction when inaccurate information is reported

◗ the right to ask that offensive photographs or visuals be omitted from airing or publication

The community has the right to grieve and recover in private.

(Zinna 1999)

It is recommended that each school have a plan for responding to critical incidents, and a team of individuals who are able to perform the duties required to manage the crisis within the school. In addition, it is recommended that each district have a plan for responding to traumatic events within the district, and a team of resource people who are trained to provide defusing and debriefing for affected students and staff. It is further recommended that a common training protocol be provided to all districts for these postvention activities to enable mutual support within and among schools and districts. It should be noted that most critical incidents impact more than one school, and occasionally more than one district, necessitating a larger pool of resources than one school or district may be able to provide.

The Department of Education has prepared a PowerPoint training package which can be delivered within each district. The following outline describes the basic elements of the training package.

Suggested Crisis-Response-Team Training Components

A. Protocol-Familiarity Training

It is essential that, upon adoption of this protocol by districts, all schools be in-serviced on the components of the protocol, as well as evacuation/secure-the-building procedures to be followed in the event of threats of risk which place the school population in imminent danger.

B. Site-Management Components

1. History Of Crisis Response In Schools

2. Fundamentals Of Trauma's Impact On Students And Staff

3. Structure Of The District Response Team

4. Roles Of Response Team Members
   ◗ Principal's Role
   ◗ Teacher's Role
   ◗ Counsellor's Role

5. Table-Top Exercise And Feedback

6. School Plan Development

C. Defusing and Debriefing Components

1. Impact Of Trauma On Adults - Grief And Stages Of Grief

2. Children's Developmental Stages And Tasks

3. Children's Understanding Of Death, By Developmental Age

4. Children's Responses To Trauma, By Developmental Age

5. Identifying At-Risk Students - Suicide Awareness, Assessment And Response

6. Purpose Of Defusing

7. Steps In Defusing

8. Purpose Of Debriefing

9. Steps In Debriefing

10. How To Set Up A Debriefing

11. When Not To Do A Debriefing

12. Follow-Up

13. Table-Top Exercise

14. Care For The Caregiver

District Office

Police/RCMP

Fire Department

Hospitals

Transportation Officer

Evacuation Site Contact

Media Contacts:

    Radio

    Newspaper

NBTA Counsellor

Community Supports

Mental Health Clinic

Clergy Support

Staff Fanout List (attach)

Parent Fanout List (attach)

Substitute Teacher List (attach)

Extra Secretarial Support (attach)

Other

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Appendix A

Procedures for Dealing with a School Hostage Situation Involving Weapons*

◗ Stay as calm as possible and remain emotionally unattached. As the adult, you must remain calm and try to contain the situation.

◗ If the intruder has not threatened anyone or has not pointed the weapon at anyone, consider sending for an administrator and removing the other students from danger by sending them out of the room. Another approach is to ask the intruder with the weapon to accompany you to another location (even the back of the room) to discuss the matter.

◗ If the intruder leaves the classroom, secure the classroom by locking the door so that the intruder cannot re-enter.

◗ Do not allow other students to condemn the intruder with the weapon or to engage in any confrontation. This is best accomplished by either having the other students leave the room or isolating the intruder with the weapon (if possible).

◗ Do not use confrontation tactics or threats of punishment. If the intruder does not indicate an intent to harm self or others, a negotiated disarming is possible. This can be done by instructing the intruder in a calm voice to surrender the weapon to you. Some intruders bring weapons to schools to show off or to call attention to their problems.

◗ Personal space issues are very important when you talk to an intruder holding a weapon. Do not face the intruder directly but instead present your left side diagonally towards the intruder. Keep at least 2 feet between yourself and the intruder.

◗ Try to get the intruder to talk to you. Find out what the intruder wants and what concerns led up to taking a weapon to school.

◗ If the situation deteriorates into a hostage situation and the intruder is threatening violence, try to move back from involved interaction and wait for trained police negotiators to arrive. If possible, slowly move around the room to your desk or another piece of furniture and sit down.

◗ Keep your hands visible. Avoid abrupt or sporadic movements. Keep a safe and nonintimidating stance. Avoid eye contact. Speak to the intruder only when spoken to and comply with all requests from the intruder.

◗ If gunshots occur, get down on the floor and take cover, if possible. Instruct any remaining students to do the same. Remain on the floor or behind cover until the police instruct otherwise.

◗ Listen to police commands and obey them.

◗ If the police use tear gas, cover your eyes and nose and remain still. Do not stand up until instructed to do so by police.

◗ The administration of the school, upon being notified of an active hostage or individual threatening with a weapon, should initiate secure-the-building procedures. Police are then notified of the situation, and someone from the school should stay in continuing contact with them until the situation is over.

◗ Be sure to include in any secure-the-school training a discussion of what to do in a hostage situation. Students need to be advised to remain as calm as possible if they hear gunfire. Students need to be trained that, in general, confrontation is not an option for resolving a weapons situation.

◗ Borrowed from

William N. Bender and Phillip J. McLaughlin, "Classroom Held Hostage: Managing Weapons Violence and Hostage Situations", Violence Prevention and Reduction in Schools (Austin, Texas: Pro-Ed, 1999), Chapter 7.

Date of survey _____ Location _____

Physical description and building configurations _____

_____

_____

Staff population and makeup _____

_____

Student population and makeup _____

_____

Purpose of the survey _____

_____

_____

Historical information related to security issues (significant incidents, criminal acts, theft experience, gang activity) _____

_____

_____

General School Security

Policies related to violence, bullying, sexual harassment, emergencies/crises, weapons, and substance abuse

_____

_____

1. Emergency drills are practised regularly related to a variety of potential crises, including fire, bomb, earthquake, tornado, and gunman (interior exercises are regularly practised when full-scale drills are not feasible). _____

_____

2. Security audits are conducted at least annually. _____

_____

6.

Safe-School Inventory Checklist

Check each security issue that, in the opinion of the school safety committee, has been adequately addressed. Note any shortcomings and devise plans for those deficient areas.

___ School is visible from neighbouring homes and businesses.

___ An active school neighbourhood watch program exists.

___ Volunteer security patrols are established.

___ Entries, loading docks, and administrative offices are visible from street.

___ Vehicular access exists around buildings to permit night surveillance and access by emergency vehicles and fire equipment.

___ Landscaping is designed to eliminate blind spots.

___ Parking lots are located so that observation is easy and open.

___ Dumpsters are far enough away from school buildings so that they do not serve as ladders to upper floors or roofs.

___ Roof access is limited by securing exposed drains, window frames, stored items, decorative ledges, vehicles, and other things onto which a person can climb or grasp.

___ Walkway covers are limited so that access is denied near second-floor windows.

___ Power meters, transformers, valves, and other mechanical and electrical devices are inside buildings or in locked, fenced areas.

___ The flagpole is on the roof or is provided with nylon-covered wire, halyards, or locked, covered boxes where halyards connect at the bottom.

___ Exterior lights are covered with break-resistant lenses or mesh covers, and light standards are made of galvanized steel or concrete. Such lights illuminate the exterior of buildings and surrounding grounds.

___ Buildings are designed with 12-foot-high, mar-resistant walls.

___ Roofs are made with fire-resistant and fire-retarding materials.

___ Walls, stairwells, and corridors are designed in such a way as to enhance visibility.

___ Suspended tile ceilings are avoided, since they are easily vandalized and can be used to hide weapons, drugs, and other items.

Landscaping

___ Trees are at least 10 feet from buildings to prevent window and roof access.

___ Trees are trimmed and do not block visibility across the campus.

___ Construction sites are separated by high perimeter fencing and locked gates.

Fencing

___ Fencing is strong and in good repair.

___ Fencing is of the appropriate type (e.g. chain-link fencing is used where visibility is needed).

___ Fence height is appropriate.

___ Fence gates are solid and locked; unnecessary gates are eliminated.

___ Gates are secured with heavy-duty padlocks that have common keys to allow school personnel, local police, firemen, and maintenance to enter with minimal delay.

Parking Area(s)

___ Parking lots are designed to discourage through-traffic cruising.

___ Speed bumps exist to reduce traffic speed.

___ Large parking lots are broken into smaller units to decrease an impersonal quality that encourages property damage.

___ School grounds are free of gravel and loose rock surfaces.

___ Directional signs are painted on curbs or streets as needed.

___ Secure areas exist for motorcycle and bicycle parking.

___ Access is denied to students' cars during school hours.

___ A separate lot exists for students who have unusual hours of attendance.

___ Parking entrances and exits are monitored.

___ Signs clearly state access regulations to parking lots.

___ Removable bollards are available to temporarily reroute traffic or block unneeded exits.

Playground Security

___ Vehicular access is eliminated or restricted around playgrounds and basketball courts.

___ Separated activity areas are easily observable.

___ Access to areas in which students congregate is limited and supervised.

___ Playground areas and playground equipment are located in areas that are easily observed by school staff, neighbours, and police patrols.

___ Drinking fountains are recessed into exterior walls rather than freestanding units so traffic is not blocked.

___ Trash cans are anchored to prevent overturning, theft, or possible use in fights.

Classroom Security

___ A system exists that allows the teacher to immediately summon assistance in the case of a crisis or potential crisis situation.

___ Unbreakable mirrors are strategically placed, allowing the teacher to observe the room from any position or angle.

___ Expensive, salable items (e.g. microscopes, CD players, computers, TV monitors) are properly secured during and after class.

___ Cabinet doors and locks are designed in such a way as to reduce the potential for harm to staff and students (e.g. cabinets large enough to hold a student in K-6 grades should be openable from the inside).

___ Discussions with students are routinely held concerning issues of perceived safety (e.g. bullying, substance abuse, gang activity).

Lighting

___ Lighting is adequate to illuminate dark areas and blind spots.

___ Entrances are well illuminated.

___ Perimeter lighting assists neighbourhood-watch programs and police patrols.

___ Lighting fixtures are vandal-proof and not easily compromised (e.g. protective lighting on the exterior should not include bulbs that can be easily accessed and unscrewed).

Lavatory Security

___ Lavatory piping is concealed as much as possible.

___ Automatic flush valves are concealed.

___ Tank-type flushing devices are nonexistent.

___ Lavatory toilet partitions and their doors are made of laminated plastic with mixed dark-coloured grain.

Computer Security

___ A tri-level system for computer security is established and maintained (e.g. students' access; teachers' access for grade reporting, etc.; and administrators' or central office access for systems operation).

___ Password systems are established and maintained based on changes in password access for each grading period and random generation of passwords.

___ Any computerized medical records or medication administration records are

8.

accessible to a very limited number of professionals.

___ School staff are limited in access to the most secure level and have access only where essential.

___ An "honour code" that delineates appropriate and inappropriate computer applications is established and signed by all faculty, staff, and students.

___ Infractions of the honour code are rigidly punished by increasingly limited access.

Doors and Windows

___ A written description of visitor regulations has been distributed to students, parents, and community members and is also posted at all entrances.

___ One entrance has been designated for visitors coming onto campus during school hours.

___ If appropriate, ID cards or some other kind of identification system exists.

___ Doors are constructed of steel, aluminum alloy, or solid-core hardwood.

___ Any necessary glass doors are fully framed and made of burglar-resistant, tempered glass.

___ Double doors are secured with multiple-point, long flush bolts.

___ Door hinges have nonremovable pins.

___ All locks are in good working order.

___ Doors are equipped with pick plates to prevent tools or plastic cards from releasing bolts.

___ Windows are appropriately located; the number of windows should be held to a minimum on the ground floor.

___ No windows are located at the end of a hallway.

Key Control Systems

___ A progressive rekeying program that replaces sensitive keys and locks every three years is budgeted for and rigidly maintained.

___ The responsibility for lock and key control is assigned to a single individual.

___ All file keys and duplicates are kept in a locked, steel key cabinet.

___ All keys are maintained and issued with strict supervision, including the requirement that each key issued must be signed out.

___ Master keys are kept to a minimum and are retained by top administrative personnel only.

___ Appropriate fines or penalties are enforced when an employee loses a key.

___ Employees are never permitted to have a duplicate key made on their own.

___ Keys are always collected from employees who terminate or transfer.

___ All keys are collected and logged at the conclusion of the school year.

___ At the end of each year, the key control system is re-evaluated, and inadequacies are corrected before keys are reissued.

___ Tumblers and bottle locks are changed if keys are permanently lost or stolen.

Theft Control

___ Cafeterias, multipurpose areas, administrative offices, safes, vaults, laboratories, music rooms, shops, arts and crafts rooms, students' supply rooms, libraries and media centres, gyms, locker rooms, and service areas are locked and secured.

___ Portable or easily sold school items are regularly inventoried, clearly and uniquely marked, and secured when not in use (e.g. calculators, typewriters, computers, laboratory balances, tools, audiovisual

equipment, shop equipment, and kitchen appliances).

___ Student files are locked in vandal-proof containers.

___ A computerized security reporting system has been developed that allows local schools to report incidents electronically.

___ Background checks that verify new employee applications are conducted.

___ A random drug-screening program exists for employees and staff.

Alarms

___ The school has an alarm system that is operational and is checked at least twice annually.

___ False alarms are kept to a minimum.

___ The staff is trained in setting alarms.

___ The alarm system is properly zoned to indicate which area of the school the intruder has entered.

Students who are at risk of performing violent acts often demonstrate behaviours that may serve as alerts to teachers and parents. These are students who are in immediate need of intervention. Observable behaviours may include

- perceived injustice history

- victim of violence/bullying

- fascination/obsessions with weapons

- voluntary exposure to violent media - an "appetite for violence"

- history of violence towards animals or destruction of property

- socially isolate, a "loner"

- recent loss or social rejection

- symptoms of depression

- conduct disorders

- has made verbal or other threats

(Adapted from Zinna 1999)

Appendix D: Sample Policy on Threats and Violence*

The following letter might provide the school with a vehicle to inform parents of the stance being taken towards violence within the district or school.

Our policy at _____ school is to strive to maintain a school environment free from intimidation, threats, or violent acts. This includes, but is not limited to intimidating, threatening or hostile behaviours, physical abuse, vandalism, arson, sabotage, possession or use of weapons, or any other act, which, in the administration's opinion, is inappropriate to the school environment. In addition, bizarre or offensive comments regarding violent events and/or aggressive behaviours will not be tolerated.

School employees or students who feel subjected to any of the behaviours listed above should immediately report this to _____
[name of designated school representative(s)]. All complaints will receive prompt attention and the situation will be investigated. Based on the results of the inquiry, disciplinary action deemed appropriate by school administration will be taken.

School employees or students who observe or have knowledge of violation of this policy should immediately report it to _____
[the appointed school representative(s)]. We will investigate these events and will request the co-operation of all incident-related individuals. An employee or student who believes there is a serious threat to the safety and health of others should report this concern directly to law enforcement authorities.

(Adapted from Zinna 1999)

Appendix E: Reference Materials

This section of the document is still under development, however it will include a list of provincial resources for prevention, intervention and response to trauma in schools, web sites of interest, and other guidelines which might assist schools in developing plans for safety for their students.

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