Section E: Safety

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Introduction: Safety

Safety for learning encompasses both physical safety and emotional/psychological safety. Creating a safe environment for learning also includes both advance planning and ready responses in a crisis.

This section discusses proactive planning in these areas:
- Physical safety in schools and on buses
- Emotional/psychological safety

For additional information about safety, contact:
- [Office of Safety and Security](), 612-668-0177
- [Crisis Response Team]()

The table below forecasts the subtopics and tools in this section, and offers some practical tips for building leaders to implement in their schools.

Focus Areas	Role of Building Leader
Planning for Safety	- **Establish systems that are effective in preventing physical hazards.** - Work with staff to understand how to create an emotionally safe environment at your school. - Create effective and efficient response systems for handling a crisis. - Practice response systems.
On the Bus	- **Reinforce bus rules with students.** - Support the bus driver's expectations.

Focus Area: Planning Ahead of Time to Make the Learning Environment Safe

Physical Safety In the Building	Emotional/Psychological Safety Overall
• Work with the Engineer to ensure that facilities are appropriate: signs posted; exits identified and lit; halls clear. Use the "Snapshot of the Physical Site" form on page 91. • Have Emergency Codes posted in halls and in every room; review periodically with staff and students. • Assign staff to doors and hallways at arrival, departure, and change of classes. • Train staff in positive ways to keep students moving (pages 40-41). • Make sure staff and students are clear about positive behavior expectations in the classroom, halls, lunchroom, and events. Review at beginning of year, before and after breaks, and periodically. • Work with police liaison officer to plan safety strategies. • Use tools in this section for planning. • Use data to pinpoint problem areas	• Encourage staff to learn students' names as quickly as possible and to greet them by name. • Find ways to ensure that students about whom staff have concerns have a staff member who knows/has some connection with him/her. (Some buildings make this a routine at staff or departmental meetings.) • Review behavior expectations with students frequently and teach positive expectations. • Stop any kind of harassment, name-calling, or bullying immediately. Any of the "isms" foster an emotionally unsafe environment. • Model respectful behavior toward staff and students. Be clear in your expectations that staff will do likewise.
Prepare for Emergencies	
• Establish an Emergency Response Team protocol. Review frequently and before school events. Work with police liaison officer.	• Establish a Crisis Response Team (CRT) to help in the aftermath of emergencies.

Tool Guide: Safety

Tool: Snapshot Assessment of Physical Site

Building leaders and designated staff can complete this assessment quarterly to review the school building's physical state.

	Fall	Winter	Spring
The school building and grounds are safe, clean and welcoming.			
Principal's office is located near main entrance, is easy to find.			
Visitors are greeted by an individual and signed in at the school's entrance.			
Building is handicapped accessible.			
From the office or lobby of the school, observe greetings, languages used, and wait time of visitors to the school.			
Meeting and social areas are welcoming and adequate in size to accommodate groups of people (families and staff).			
Bathrooms are unlocked, clean and smoke-free.			
No graffiti exists. To remove graffiti, contact the district's Facilities Department at 612-668-0300.			
Ground and floors are free of litter.			
Cafeteria is clean.			
Physical layout of cafeteria allows for easy flow of traffic.			
Hallways are free of clutter to allow for flow of traffic.			
Signs help people find their way around and into building.			
Daytime and evening entrances are well marked.			
Playground is debris-free.			
Exterior lights are clean and in good working order.			

Tool: Planning for Events and Assemblies

The assembled masses, yearning to be troublesome.

Expectations for all students
- Students will be verbally and physically appropriate in all school areas.
- Students will comply with all posted rules and all adult directives.
- Students will attend to the programmed activity in the assembly.

Expectations for all staff
- Staff will remind students of expected, pro-social behavior and consequences for misbehavior before each assembly.
- Staff will increase the amount of structured activities and teacher direction prior to moving.
- Staff will enforce high structure just before moving to assemblies.
- Staff will provide high structure upon arrival to the assembly.

Advance planning
- Staff will develop and use not only whole class seating charts, but also individual student seating charts for assemblies.
- In planning assemblies, adequate staff to student ratios will be provided.
- Staff will be assigned to all areas where students will be present.

Practice makes compliant
- Rehearse expected behaviors using specific examples before leaving class for an assembly.
- Emphasize that boos and catcalls will result in individuals, or, if appropriate, entire classes being barred from the next assembly or sporting event.

Preparing for transitions will require:
- Clear attending directives
- Clear directions for movement
- Clear reward, redirection, and feedback, adjusted as needed for age and grade
- Monitor students while leaving the current area, monitor the move, and monitor students upon arrival at the next area.

Assembly in progress
- Staff should remain with their classes, perhaps seated within the classroom grouping
- If staff cannot see students and speak to them in a normal voice, the students are not being supervised.
- For minor offenses use redirection and, if necessary, verbal reprimands.

- For first occurrences of major offenses, such as threatening or obscene behavior, and for second offenses of a minor nature, remove the student immediately. Ban them from the next assembly or sporting event.

After the assembly
- Dismiss students by classes or seating location.
- Return students to class in groups.
- If the end of the assembly coincides with a break, staff should monitor hallways, and direct or redirect students to move to the next area promptly.
- Give students positive feedback during passing time. Engage in brief, positive social interactions with students who are appropriate while moving from location to location
- Praise students for appropriate behavior before, during, and after the assembly.

Tool: Planning for Dances

A school dance is a reward or an extracurricular activity, not a school's obligation to the students. Because a dance presents cues for behavior that do not normally occur at school, greater preparation, along with clear and consistent behavior expectations are necessary. Schools require a higher standard of social behavior than is expected in a nightclub.

For all dances
- Inform students of rules for proper dance behavior and unacceptable dance conduct, such as freak dancing, well in advance of the event. Schools must meet a higher standard to make the dance inviting for the most conservative students and families.
- Have enough lighting to monitor all areas of the dance floor, regardless of student desire for total darkness. If you cannot see all students easily from any area of adult supervision, the dance floor is too dark for a school event.
- Have enough staff on duty to get all persons in the dance within 30 minutes of the start time.
- All tickets should be sold in advance of the date of the dance; there should be no day-of or onsite sales.
- Strictly adhere to fire code limits on capacity.
- Screen all music ahead of time and eliminate specific sexual terminology, language generally regarded as obscene, and violent, discriminatory or harassing language. The music should be consistent with school district discrimination, harassment and hostile workplace policies.
- All entrants must have student ID.
- Even at a high school dance, persons over high school age should not be allowed entry.

For high school dances
- Schedule police, school staff and parent supervision one week prior to the event.
- Consider making the primary access road in front of the school a one-way road for the duration of the event.
- If there is a reasonable expectation that non-students and other outside persons will try to disrupt the event, the school's police liaison officer can arrange to have a marked squad car at the entry point of the road or at the entry door.
- Have perimeter security linked by radio to central security for all evening dances.
- The outside area should be well lit, and there should be immediate access to full lighting in the dance area.
- Use controlled entry lines such as a weave pattern queue.
- All entrances should have metal detectors; male and female search-trained staff and a coat and purse check room at the door.
- Have a student suspension/expulsion /trespass list at each door for the security staff.