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AUTHOR DeMary, Jo Lynne; Owens, Marsha; Ramnarain, A. K. Vijay  
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ABSTRACT

The 1997 Virginia General Assembly passed legislation directing school boards to require all schools to conduct safety audits. This audit is designed to assess the safety conditions in each public school to: (1) identify and, if necessary, develop solutions for physical safety concerns, including building security issues; and (2) identify and evaluate any patterns of student safety concerns occurring on school property or at school-sponsored events. The legislation also directed the superintendent of public instruction to develop a list of items to be reviewed and evaluated in the school safety audits. As a result, the Department of Education developed this school safety audit protocol to be used as a guide for the audit. The guide addresses components of the audit process, the audit protocol, the audit procedure, audit forms (buildings and grounds, development and enforcement of policies, data collection, prevention and intervention programs, staff development, student involvement, parent and community involvement, role of law enforcement, crisis management plan, standards for security personnel, Americans with Disabilities Act, and emergency response plan), and audit interviews. (EV)

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# SCHOOL SAFETY AUDIT PROTOCOL



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# **SCHOOL SAFETY AUDIT PROTOCOL**

Dr. Jo Lynne DeMary  
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Marsha Owens  
Project Coordinator

A.K. (Vijay) Ramnarain  
Project Coordinator

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# SCHOOL SAFETY AUDIT PROTOCOL

## Introduction

This document is a collaborative effort of the Virginia Department of Education and school divisions throughout the commonwealth. As a result of 1997 legislation that required all schools in Virginia to conduct a building-level school safety audit, the Department of Education developed the state's first protocol to guide schools in the audit process.

Since that time, school officials have collected information from their experiences in conducting the audit process and new research has emerged regarding best practices in maintaining a safe school environment. Therefore, this revision is a compilation of practical experiences and current research.

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For additional information about this document or the audit process, please contact:

Marsha Owens	A.K. (Vijay) Ramnarain
School Safety Specialist	Architectural Consultant
Virginia Department of Education	Virginia Department of Education
P.O. Box 2120	P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218	Richmond, VA 23218
(804) 225-2928	(804) 225-2035

Additional copies may be requested by contacting the Department of Education's School Safety Resource Center at (804) 225-2928.

# School Safety Audit Guidelines

## Descriptive Statement

The 1997 Virginia General Assembly passed HB 1851 directing school boards to require all schools to conduct safety audits. (See Attachment I.) This audit is designed to "assess the safety conditions in each public school to (i) identify and, if necessary, develop solutions for physical safety concerns, including building security issues, and (ii) identify and evaluate any patterns of student safety concerns occurring on school property or at school-sponsored events."

HB 1851 also directed the superintendent of public instruction to develop a list of items to be reviewed and evaluated in the school safety audits. As a result, the Department of Education has developed this *School Safety Audit Protocol* to be used as a guide for the audit.

During the 1999 session, the General Assembly amended §22.1-278.1 of the Code of Virginia. This amendment requires that the audit be a written assessment, and each school must maintain a copy of the audit report in the principal's office. The school is also required to make a copy of the audit available for review upon written request.

# Components of the Audit Process

The level of safety at each school must be assessed according to multiple indicators that apply to the total school facility, the school's climate, and the school's partnership with parents and the community.

At a minimum, the audit process should address the following:

1. Safety and Security of Buildings and Grounds
2. Development and Enforcement of Policies
3. Procedures for Data Collection
4. Development of Intervention and Prevention Plans
5. Level of Staff Development
6. Opportunities for Student Involvement
7. Level of Parent and Community Involvement
8. Role of Law Enforcement
9. Development of Crisis Management Plans
10. Standards for Safety and Security Personnel
11. Americans with Disabilities Act
12. Emergency Response Plans

School safety is the responsibility of every one—staff, students, parents, and the community. An audit is one tool that, if used effectively, can provide a snapshot of the school's safety and identify areas that need improvement. This proactive process will help ensure that students can achieve their learning potential within a safe and secure environment.

# Audit Protocol

- **What is the school's responsibility to be in compliance with §22.1-278 of the Code of Virginia?**

As of June 1998, each school must have submitted to the superintendent of public instruction a signed certificate of completion (see Attachment II) to document that an audit has been completed. This certification must be resubmitted every three years. A written copy of the audit must be kept on file in the principal's office in each school.

- **How often should a school conduct a safety audit?**

Each school should conduct a complete safety audit every three years. A review of the recommendations set forth in the written report should be conducted annually.

- **Are schools required to complete a written report of the audit findings?**

The Code of Virginia (§22.1-278.1), as amended in 1999, requires that audit reports be written. A copy of the written report must be kept on file in the principal's office in each school and must be available for review upon written request.

- **Are schools required to submit certification of audit completion?**

The division superintendent will sign the certification form included in this package (see Attachment II) following completion of the safety audit. This form must be submitted to the superintendent of public instruction no later than June 1 of the academic year during which the audit was conducted. (For example, if a school's first audit was certified in June, 1998, the school must certify its next audit no later than June 1, 2001.)

- **What is the school's responsibility during the three-year interim between audits?**

The building administrator, in consultation with an audit team representative, should conduct an annual review of the written audit report. The intent of this procedure is to monitor the ongoing progress of the recommendations set forth in the report and to identify any additional needs or safety concerns that may have developed since the audit was conducted.



# Audit Procedure

## A. Planning

Each school division should create a safety audit team that will conduct the audits at schools in the division. Team members should represent a variety of stakeholders including, but not limited to, central office administrators, teachers, school nurses, counselors, parents, law enforcement personnel, maintenance personnel, and community volunteers. The team should be comprised of from three to six members.

To ensure neutrality and objectivity, team members should not audit their own facility. For example, the principal in School A should be part of the team that audits School B. Team members can rotate off and on the team, depending on the school site being audited.

While a school or school division may choose to contract with private organizations to conduct the safety audits, it is advantageous to use available resources within the school and community, insofar as possible. This helps to develop a sense of ownership throughout the school and community, which is an essential component to maintaining safe schools. Outside consultants usually are unlikely to maintain an ongoing relationship with staff, students, and parents.

Likewise, it is not recommended that a single individual conduct the audit. The team approach provides more objectivity, and the school benefits from the expertise that can be provided by a variety of individuals. Yet another advantage for the school is the opportunity to inform the community about the school's programs, procedures, and initiatives that are focused on maintaining school safety.

## B. Preparation for the On-Site Visit

Audit team members should review the following documents and materials (if available), preferably in advance of the on-site visit:

- Student Conduct Policy Guidelines
- Data on student discipline referrals (including referrals to law enforcement)
- Criminal data (as reported by the school and by the surrounding community to law enforcement)
- Floor plan of the school
- Crisis Management Plan
- Current evacuation plan
- Attendance data

The audit team leader should contact the building principal and schedule the on-site visit two or three weeks prior to the visit. The building principal will be

able to determine the best date for the audit in an effort to minimize disruption to the instructional schedule.

### **C. On-site Visit**

The audit team should schedule an on-site visit with the building principal two to three weeks prior to the visit. Allow approximately one day to conduct the visit. This will include informal interviews with administrators and randomly-selected staff and students. If a School Resource Officer (SRO) or security officers are assigned to the school, they should be included in the interview process. The purpose of the interviews is to determine the perceived level of safety among various users.

Two or three team members should be adequate to manage the on-site visit. Fewer than two members will not provide a comprehensive and objective assessment, and more than three members may disrupt the school's normal activity.

During the visit, team members should follow the checklists in this packet to ensure that all components of the audit are addressed. These checklists can be used as guides, but team members may assess additional components that may be determined locally. The specific activities during the visit include:

1. Meeting with the building principal and other administrators
2. Informal interviews (see Audit Interview)
3. A walk-through and visual assessment of the buildings and grounds
4. A brief exit interview with the principal

### **D. Follow-up to the On-site Visit**

Following the visit, the audit team will prepare a written report of the findings to be submitted to the principal and the division superintendent. The report should include (minimally) both commendations and recommendations.

The division superintendent should submit the School Safety Audit Certification (see Attachment II) to the superintendent of public instruction no later than June 1 of the academic year during which the audit was conducted and should be completed within three weeks of the visit.

A written copy of this report must be filed in the principal's office and be made available for review upon written request.

## Section1

# BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

### DIRECTIONS:

Use the following checklist to assess the school's current level of safety related to **buildings and grounds**. If an element is in place, check YES. If changes need to be made, check IMPROVE. If the element is not in place, check NO. If the school plans to implement this missing element, check IMPLEMENT. In some cases, an element may be not applicable (N/A) to your school.

## A. SITE AND BUILDING EXTERIOR

### 1. Surrounding Environment

Preamble: It may not be possible to change the existing adjacent land use patterns. However, the audit should address the influences (both positive and negative) of the surrounding environment and the resulting issues related to safe school planning.

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
<p>1. The school is in an:</p> <p>Urban location Suburban location Rural location (circle one)</p> <p>Briefly describe any visible impact of the location on the school site and building.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>					
<p>2. The school is close to an industrial area.</p> <p>Briefly describe any visible impact on the school.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>					

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
<p>3. The school is adjacent to a shopping area (grocery, convenience or other).</p> <p>Briefly describe any visible impact on the school (empty cans, debris, hanging area for groups).</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>					
<p>4. The school is located adjacent to an interstate.</p> <p>Briefly describe any visible impact on the school (increased traffic or other, such as, damaged fencing).</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>					
<p>5. The school is off a major (4-lane) state road.</p> <p>Briefly describe the traffic flow and how it impacts entry and exit onto the school property (such as the need for acceleration/deceleration lanes).</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>					
<p>6. The school is on a busy residential road (i.e., not divided by a median).</p> <p>Briefly describe traffic flow and how it impacts entry and exit onto school property (such as the need for acceleration/deceleration lanes).</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>					

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
7. School property boundary lines can be visually recognized as separate from adjacent properties.					
8. School grounds are fenced, if appropriate, for reasons of safety, visual separation or pedestrian control. If yes, approximate height _____.					
9. Gates, if existing, are secured after regular school hours and school activities.					
10. The school has a marquee (or some other sign) clearly indicating the school's name (and street address).					
11. The parking lot has signs to direct staff, students and visitors to designated parking areas.					
12. A parking area has been designated for student drivers who leave school grounds during regular school hours.					
13. The school has posted "No Trespassing" signs, including reference to appropriate state laws and local zoning regulations and penalties.					
14. The school has signs to direct visitors to designated points of entry into the building.					
15. The school has posted drug free zone signs.					

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
16. The school has evaluated and appropriately removed all tree hazards (i.e., the potential of trees or branches to collapse due to rot or damage or to otherwise cause injury or damage).					
17. The school has trimmed shrubs and foliage to allow for good line of sight (i.e. 3'0"/8'0" rule).					
18. The school has removed all identifiable poisonous shrubs, trees and foliage.					
19. The building perimeter is free from trees, branches, and telephone poles that may provide access to the building's upper floor levels or roof.					
20. Trash bins are available throughout the school site.					
21. The school grounds are free from trash and other debris.					
22. Bus traffic is separated from other vehicular traffic at entrance, exit, and pick-up points.					
23. Bus loading and drop off zones are clearly designated.					
24. Parent drop off and pick up areas are clearly designated.					
25. Staff members the bus loading/ drop-off area and parent drop-off and pick up area.					

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
26. Policy restricts other vehicles from access to the bus-loading zone during loading/unloading.					

### 3. Play Areas

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
27. The play areas have clearly defined boundaries and are protected with fencing.					
28. The play areas have ground cover to a depth recommended by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).					
29. The play equipment complies with Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) guidelines.					
30. The play areas are designed to have adequate water drainage.					
31. Vehicular access is restricted around play areas.					
32. Emergency vehicles can access play areas and ball fields easily.					
33. Bleachers are well maintained, (painted with no signs of rust).					
34. The risers between bleacher seats are protected to prevent entrapment and children from falling through.					
35. Field houses can be secured for safety and security.					



## 5. Surveillance

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
36. The school has designated points of entry which are monitored to control building access.					
37. Visual surveillance of parking lots or monitoring by remote security cameras is possible from the main office or some other area.					
38. Visual surveillance of play areas is possible.					
39. Visual surveillance of bike racks, if present, is possible.					
40. Law enforcement, security or other staff members patrol parking areas during school hours.					
41. Patrolling security vehicles have access to buildings and grounds after school hours.					
42. Student access to the parking areas is monitored during school hours.					
43. In secondary schools, driver education vehicles are protected from theft and vandalism.					
44. In secondary schools, students and staff members must obtain parking decals or some other appropriate form of identification to authorize legitimate student parking on school property.					

## 6. Building Exterior

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
45. The school exterior walls are free from graffiti.					
46. The exterior windows have no broken glazing.					
47. Basement windows are well protected with a grill or well cover.					
48. Low canopies or awnings have protective parapets to deter their use to climb onto roofs.					
49. Trash containers are located away from canopies.					
50. Mechanical, electrical and other equipment on the ground is surrounded by a protective enclosure.					
51. Roof access ladders are located and designed to prevent unauthorized access to the roof.					
52. Deep recesses in buildings with wings are fenced for safety.					
53. Deep recesses in buildings with wings are well lit.					
54. In a campus style school with doors opening to the outside, classroom doors are locked when rooms are vacant.					
55. Entrances and other points of possible intrusions are well lit.					
56. The building has adequate outside lighting to enhance night safety.					

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
57. The parking lot lighting provides uniform coverage that supports camera surveillance.					
58. Wall mounted fixtures are protected with a grill cover.					
59. Pole mounted fixtures are located high enough to prevent damage due to vandalism.					
60. Light fixtures are covered with a vandal resistant cover.					
61. Remote security camera and lenses are covered with a vandal resistant casing.					
62. The remote camera location provides maximum coverage of the grounds.					
63. The view angles of security cameras are free and unobstructed by building elements or trees.					

## B. BUILDING INTERIOR

### 1. Administration and Main Lobby

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
1. The designated entrance door has clearly visible signs showing the location of the main office and advising visitors to report to the office.					
2. Visual surveillance of the main lobby from the office is possible.					
3. Staff members, volunteer personnel, or a security camera monitor the main entrance lobby.					
4. The main lobby is well lit.					
5. Visitors are required to sign in at the main office.					
6. Visitors must show proper identification if they are unrecognized by appropriate school authorities.					
7. Students are issued identification badges.					
8. Staff members (including support staff and bus drivers) are issued identification badges.					
9. Friends, relatives, or non-custodial parents are required to show appropriate identification before the school releases a student from the premises.					

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
10. The school maintains a record of fire inspection by the local or state fire officer.					
11. Fire drills are conducted as required by Code (22.1-137).					
12. The school maintains a record of required health permits.					
13. Valuable items can be stored in a secure storage area.					
14. The school maintains an up-to-date inventory for all expendable school supplies.					
15. School files and records are maintained in locked, vandal proof, fireproof containers or vaults.					
16. The school has a central security alarm system. If yes, provide a description. _____ _____					

## 2. Hallways and Bathrooms

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
17. The hallways are uniformly and adequately lit for safety.					
18. Hallways are clean and walls are free of graffiti.					
19. Blind spots in hallways and stairwells are equipped with parabolic mirrors (or some similar surveillance device).					
20. Remote and isolated hallways are monitored by security cameras or other monitoring methods.					
21. Exit signs are lit, clearly visible, and point in the correct exit direction.					
22. Clear and precise emergency evacuation maps are posted at critical locations.					
23. Hallways with lockers are wide enough to allow for two-way circulation and locker activities during class changes.					
24. Locker bays are well lit, aisles are wide enough to allow circulation in both directions and can be easily supervised.					
25. Bathrooms are bright and well lit.					
26. Adults supervise bathrooms.					
27. The bathroom walls and stalls are free of graffiti.					

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
28. Exposed plumbing pipes are insulated and protected with a cover.					
29. The lighting fixtures have protective covers.					
30. Bathrooms have a smoke alarm detector.					
31. All bathroom stalls have doors and operable locks.					
32. Bathrooms comply with ADA requirements.					
33. Bathroom door hardware prevents locking from inside.					
34. There is no lay-in ceiling in the bathrooms.					
35. Unused areas of the school can be closed off when not in use after regular school hours.					
36. Stairwells are well lit.					
37. Stairwells are monitored.					
38. There are staff members on hallway duty.					
39. Switches and controls are properly located and protected from unauthorized access.					

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
40. Visual surveillance of pay phones is possible from main office or monitored in some other way.					
41. Clear signage indicates room numbers, space designations and provide directional information.					
42. Elevator use is restricted.					
43. The school conducts regular inspections of elevators as required by law.					



### 3. Classrooms and Other Instructional Areas

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
44. Classrooms are well lit.					
45. Vision panels are clear and unobstructed with posters.					
46. A two way communication system is in place between the main office and all classrooms, including supplemental rooms (trailers).					
47. The location of trailers enables natural surveillance.					
48. If located in isolated areas, the trailers are monitored with security cameras.					
49. The trailers are connected to the school's central alarm system.					
50. The crawl space below the trailers is closed off.					
51. Students are restricted from entering a classroom alone without proper supervision.					
52. The trailers are well lit.					
53. Fume hoods in labs are in good working condition and vent directly to the exterior.					
54. Kilns vent directly to the exterior.					
55. Chemicals and lab equipment in preparation rooms and labs are stored in secure storage spaces.					

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
56. Lab preparation areas, hazardous storage areas and mechanical rooms are properly protected from unauthorized access.					
57. A log is maintained of all chemicals and other dangerous substances.					
58. Dust removal equipment in shops is in working condition.					
59. Paint booths, auto shops and welding booths are well ventilated and exhaust directly to the exterior.					
60. Eye wash stations in labs and vocational shops are in working condition.					

#### 4. Gymnasium, Media Center, Music Rooms, Commons, and Cafeteria

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
61. The cafeteria area is well lit.					
62. The commons area is clean and well lit.					
63. The commons area has noise control (such as acoustics panels, split blocks, skewed walls).					
64. In the commons area a mix of different seating configurations is available.					
65. The media center is well lit.					
66. The media center has a computerized check out system.					
67. Visual surveillance of the reading room and book shelves is possible from the media office and check out counter.					
68. Security scanners at the door detect illegal removal of books & other materials.					
69. Bleachers in gym spaces are safe, secure, and in good repair.					
70. Lockers in gym areas are the open mesh type.					
71. Visual surveillance of the locker rooms from the coach's office is possible.					
72. Lockers are free of graffiti.					

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
73. There is a mix of private showers and gang showers.					
74. Light fixtures have protective covers.					
75. Exterior access to the auditorium, where available, is controlled and monitored.					
76. Access to catwalk and prop areas is restricted.					
77. Seating for the disabled is available, as per ADA requirements, in the auditorium and the gym.					
78. Instruments are stored in secure storage areas.					

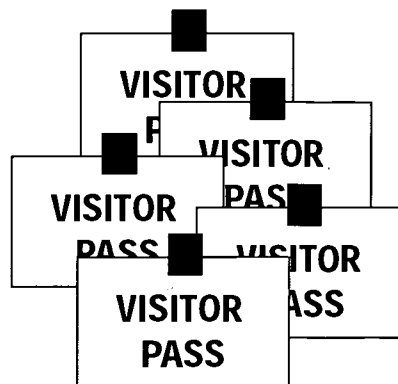
## C. Maintenance and Security

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
1. All exterior doors have non-removable hinge pins.					
2. Exterior doors, unless designated for entry, have no exterior hardware.					
3. Exterior doors have a protective plate covering locks.					
4. Double doors have an astragal (plate) covering the gap between doors.					
5. All operable windows have hardware in working condition.					
6. Required exit doors are equipped with panic hardware.					
7. Hallways leading to required exit doors are kept clear and unencumbered with furniture.					
8. A master key control system is in place to monitor keys and duplicates.					
9. Doors accessing internal courtyards are tied into the central alarm system.					
10. The school has developed written regulations regarding access to and use of the building by school personnel after regular school hours.					

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
11. Staff members who remain after hours are required to sign out.					
12. Staff members must lock unoccupied classrooms when not in use.					
13. High-risk areas such as the office, cafeteria, computer rooms, music room, shops and labs are protected by high security locks and an alarm system.					
14. The security alarm system receives regular maintenance and/or testing.					
15. Building security at night is provided by either : a. adequate exterior directional lighting, or b. total blackout.					
16. All school equipment is permanently marked with an identification number.					
17. The school maintains record of all maintenance on doors, windows, lockers, and other areas of the school.					

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
18. One person is designated to perform the following security checks at the end of each day:					
- Check that all classrooms and offices are locked.					
- Check all restrooms and locker rooms to ensure that everyone has left the building.					
- Check all exterior entrances to ensure that they are locked.					
- Check all night-lights to ensure that they have been turned on.					
- Check the security alarm system.					
19. The school has a maintenance schedule for checking:					
- Lights					
- Locks and other hardware					
- Storage sheds/areas					
- Portable classrooms (trailers)					
- Other  _____  _____					

# BEST PRACTICE TIP

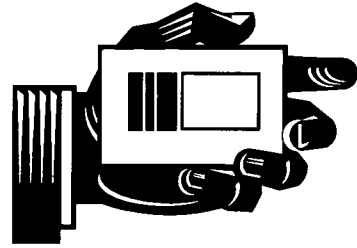


## Building Security

- Student identification badges provide instant recognition of all students. This enables staff members to address students by name, which is considered to be an effective intervention strategy when students are engaged in verbal or physical conflict.
- Staff and visitor identification badges are useful in quickly identifying individuals who may not have legitimate business on school property.
- **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)** is a crime prevention principle based on the use of natural surveillance techniques, which are less costly and easier to implement than technological devices. Information on CPTED is available on the Internet @ [www.cpted.org/default.htm](http://www.cpted.org/default.htm)
- Adult visibility is considered to be the single, most effective—and least costly—strategy to prevent inappropriate student behavior.
- Designated points of entry provide building security by discouraging intruders and others who may not have legitimate business at the school.
- Visitors to the school who are unfamiliar with the building and grounds need highly visible and clearly written directions. Such directions should guide visitors to the designated parking area, then to the designated entry, and finally to the location at which the visitor must sign in. Without visible signs and directions, visitors who might be authorized to be on campus may--inadvertently--become suspicious to school officials. Furthermore, the school may--inadvertently--project an unwelcome and disorganized image to the public.



## BEST PRACTICE TIP



### Key Control and School Security: Is Your School Vulnerable?

Every school administrator needs to ask these very basic questions:

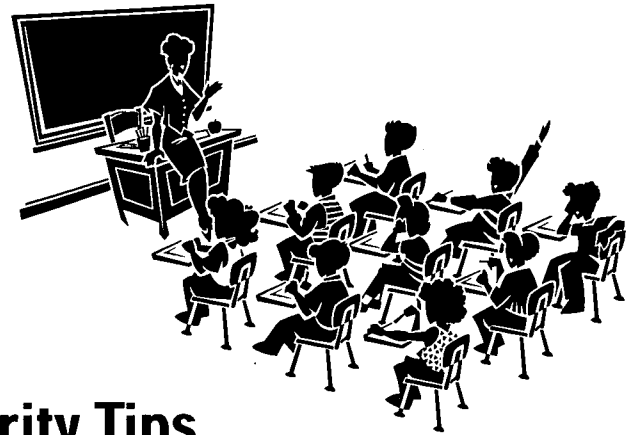
1. Do you know who has the keys to every door in the school?
2. Can you be sure a master key has not been duplicated without proper authorization?
3. What do you do when a master key is lost or stolen?

#### **Possible Solution:**

Some school districts are evaluating card access systems. While these systems are effective for high volume entry points where it is important to know who entered a particular door at what time, they are cost prohibitive as a solution for total key control and not generally necessary on most doors.

*(Source: School Safety Update, National School Safety Center Newsletter, October, 1999)*

# BEST PRACTICE TIP



## Portable Classroom Security Tips

- Locate them in a well-lighted area
- Eliminate sight-line barriers
- Use an alarm system, especially if the buildings house TVs, VCRs, and computers
- Reduce visibility into the structure
- Provide communications with the main office
- Provide covered walkways
- Use volunteers or support staff to monitor the grounds around the portable
- Use the "buddy system" for younger students when they must go to and from the portables

*(Source: Maintaining Safe Schools, LRP Publications, January, 1999, p. 3)*

# BEST PRACTICE TIP

## Review of Architects' Contracts



- All architects' contracts for renovations or new construction should be reviewed so that there is an obligation on the part of the architect to evaluate the security or safety concerns in all building designs.
- Architects should be required to review all architectural and safety issues in a building, including, but not limited to, preparing specifications that would enable certain doors to be equipped with only one-way locks for student and staff protection.
- Architectural design should account for better access and fewer entrances to school buildings. This may result in wider hallways, larger entrances, and the like, but would limit access to the building.
- Additionally, electronic monitoring concerns should be addressed as part of any school building project.

*(Source: LRP Publications, June, 1999, p. 3)*

## Section 2

# Development and Enforcement of Policies

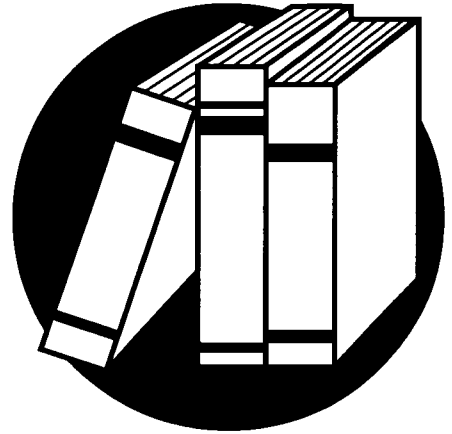
### DIRECTIONS:

Use the following checklist to assess the school's current level of safety related to the **development and enforcement of policies**. If an element is in place, check YES. If changes need to be made, check IMPROVE. If the element is not in place, check NO. If the school plans to implement this missing element, check IMPLEMENT. In some cases, an element may be not applicable (N/A) to your school.

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
1. The student code of conduct is reviewed and updated annually.					
2. A visitor policy is in effect, requiring a sign-in procedure for all visitors, including visible identification.					
3. A chain-of-command has been established for the school when the principal and/or other administrators are away from the building.					
4. The school has implemented security measures on campus, at school sponsored activities, and on all school property (including school buses).					
5. Disciplinary consequences for infractions to the student code of conduct are fairly and consistently enforced.					
6. Parents are an integral part of the planning of student discipline procedures and actions.					

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
7. Alternatives to suspensions and expulsions have been built into the discipline policy and are used consistently.					
8. Behavioral expectations and consequences for violations are clearly outlined in the code of conduct, including sanctions for weapon and drug offenses and other criminal actions.					
9. The policy provides a system whereby staff and students may report anonymously problems, incidents, or potential dangers.					
10. Specific policies and/or procedures are in place that detail staff members' responsibilities for monitoring and supervising students outside the classroom, such as in hallways, rest rooms, etc.					
11. Students are required to wear identification badges.					
12. Staff members are required to wear identification badges.					
13. The school has a policy for handling all cash collected.					
14. The school has a policy that restricts unauthorized access to buildings and grounds both during and after regular school hours.					
15. Visitors to the school must wear school-issued identification while on school property.					

# BEST PRACTICE TIP



## Policy Development

The Fourteenth Amendment compels school administrators to apply equally and fairly, all school rules and to provide due process procedures for students.

School policies should protect students and staff against:

- foreseeable criminal activity
- student crime or violence that can be prevented by adequate supervision
- identifiably dangerous students
- dangerous individuals negligently admitted to or placed in schools
- school administrators, teachers, and other staff who are negligently selected, inadequately trained, or inappropriately retained

Student codes of conduct must conform to constitutional requirements or guarantees.

## Section 3

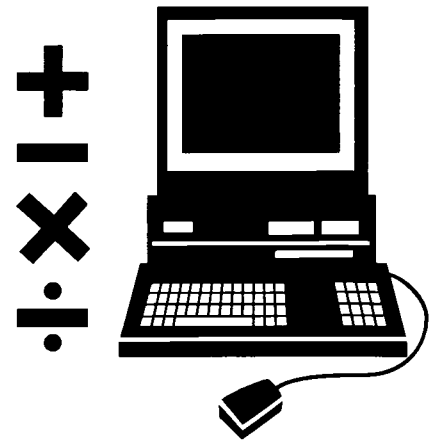
# Data Collection

### DIRECTIONS:

Use the following checklist to assess the school's current level of safety related to the **collection of data**. If an element is in place, check YES. If changes need to be made, check IMPROVE. If the element is not in place, check NO. If the school plans to implement this missing element, check IMPLEMENT. In some cases, an element may be not applicable (N/A) to your school.

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
1. Data on violations of state and federal law are reported to law enforcement as required by Code.					
2. The school has established an incident reporting system for disruptive incidents.					
3. The school has established a system for analyzing data to identify recurring problems and to provide information relative to prevention and intervention procedures.					
4. The school files an accident report in the event of student injury on school property or during school-related activities.					
5. The school has developed a procedure for an annual review and update of the incident reporting system.					
6. The school maintains a copy of the safety audit report in the principal's office as required by the Code of Virginia.					

# BEST PRACTICE TIP



## Data Collection

- Collect incident-based data
- Collect data on incidents that occur on school property, including transportation, and at off-campus school-sponsored events.
- Review at least weekly to assess any patterns or trends
- Develop prevention and intervention strategies to address incidents that threaten a school's safety and security
- Inform parents regularly of the data results and provide information about the school's response to these results



## Section 4

# Prevention and Intervention

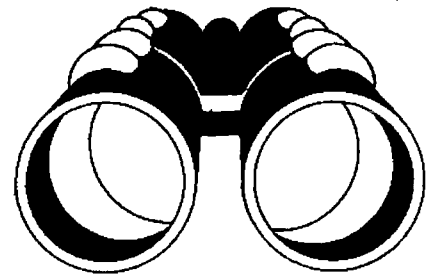
### DIRECTIONS:

Use the following checklist to assess the school's current level of safety related to **prevention and intervention efforts**. If an element is in place, check YES. If changes need to be made, check IMPROVE. If the element is not in place, check NO. If the school plans to implement this missing element, check IMPLEMENT. In some cases, an element may be not applicable (N/A) to your school.

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
1. Students have access to conflict resolution programs.					
2. Students are assisted in developing anger management skills.					
3. Respect for diversity is emphasized school-wide.					
4. Bilingual and multicultural resources are available to students and staff members.					
5. Programs are available for students who are academically at-risk.					
6. Students may ask for help without the loss of confidentiality.					
7. Students and parents are aware of community resources.					

<b>Checklist Element</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Implement</b>	<b>Improve</b>
8. A bully prevention program is in place.					
9. The school has a well-developed network of service providers to which students can be referred.					
10. Crisis prevention is an integral part of the school's safety plan; that is, practice of emergency drills and evacuation, a partnership with law enforcement officials, metal detection capability, and adequate adult monitoring at all times.					
11. Adequate suicide prevention support systems are in place for students.					
12. The school has implemented a character education program in accordance with the Code of Virginia.					

# BEST PRACTICE TIP



## Prevention and Intervention Programs

- Conflict mediation programs teach skills that students can use to resolve conflicts peacefully and with limited adult intervention. This decreases the need for administrative time involved in student conflicts.
- School personnel should be trained in conflict mediation skills, which can then be modeled and infused into the school's daily routines. School-wide conflict mediation programs experience a greater degree of success than do "pull-out" programs.
- School officials need to be alert to information about potential harm or threats to the safety and security of staff members and students (also known as "leakage"). It is imperative that a climate of trust be established that will encourage disclosure of information to adults on campus.
- Bullying depends on the bully-victim-observer triad. Schools should provide bully prevention programs that teach negotiation skills to all students who may be potential victims of bullying; refusal skills to all students who may be observers of bullying; and leadership skills to all students who may use bullying as an inappropriate way of being a leader.

## Section 5

# Staff Development

### DIRECTIONS:

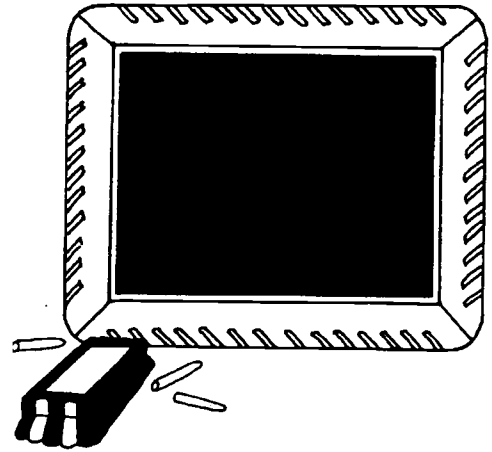
Use the following checklist to assess the school's current level of safety related to **staff development**. If an element is in place, check YES. If changes need to be made, check IMPROVE. If the element is not in place, check NO. If the school plans to implement this missing element, check IMPLEMENT. In some cases, an element may be not applicable (N/A) to your school.

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
1. The principal, teachers, and other staff members maintain a highly visible presence throughout the school and school grounds.					
2. Administrators, teachers, and other staff members (including school bus drivers, security and law enforcement personnel) are trained in conflict resolution skills.					
3. Administrators, teachers, and other staff (including school bus drivers, security and law enforcement personnel) are trained in implementing the school's crisis management plan.					
4. Administrators, teachers, and other staff members (including school bus drivers) are trained in personal safety.					
5. School security officers (NOT law enforcement personnel) receive in-service training related to their responsibilities and in compliance with the school's policies.					

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
6. School Resource Officers (SROs) receive in-service training related to their responsibilities and in compliance with the school's policies.					
7. School volunteers receive training to assist them in effectively performing their duties.					
8. Teachers and other staff members are made aware of their legal responsibilities for the enforcement of state and federal laws (such as the Gun-free Schools Act).					
9. School safety and violence prevention information is provided regularly to staff as part of a school or systemwide staff development plan.					
10. Staff development opportunities extend to support staff, including secretarial, cafeteria, custodial personnel and bus drivers.					
11. Administrators, teachers, and support staff have received training in the prevention of bullying behaviors.					
12. Administrators and teachers have been trained to recognize the early warning signs of potentially violent students.					
13. Administrators and teachers have been trained to recognize the early warning signs of potentially suicidal students, including knowledge of the appropriate steps in referring students for help.					

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
14. The school has established a procedure and trained staff in the appropriate responses to fighting :					
a. Not involving a weapon					
b. Involving a weapon					
15. The school has established a procedure for appropriate staff response to threats from students and parents.					
16. Teachers and other staff members have been trained in how to respond appropriately to suspicious materials, packages, items, etc.					

# BEST PRACTICE TIP



## Staff Development

- Train all teachers and other staff members in the implementation of the school's Crisis Management Plan.
- Provide training for all teachers and staff in negotiation skills. Non-compliant students can often be deterred from becoming confrontational if provided an opportunity to reach a compromise by using negotiation skills appropriately.
- Provide training for all teachers that will enhance classroom management skills, particularly with regard to defusing anger and de-escalating conflict.
- Provide clear guidelines to all staff members to address the school's expectations in dealing with student fights. Intervening in fights may place staff members in harm's way, especially if a weapon is involved. Staff members should be adequately trained in accordance with local policy.
- Provide clear information to all staff members regarding the role of law enforcement in the school's day-to-day activities, as well as in the unlikely event that a crisis should occur (such as a school shooting).

## Section 6

# Opportunities for Student Involvement

### DIRECTIONS:

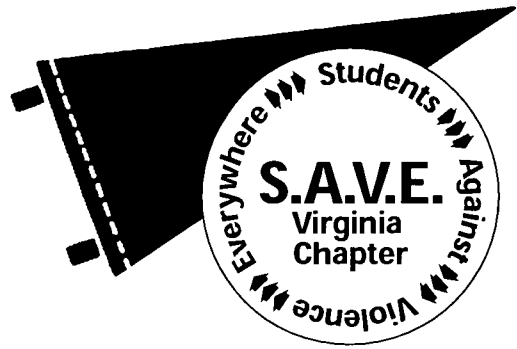
Use the following checklist to assess the school's current level of safety related to **opportunities for student involvement**. If an element is in place, check YES. If changes need to be made, check IMPROVE. If the element is not in place, check NO. If the school plans to implement this missing element, check IMPLEMENT. In some cases, an element may be not applicable (N/A) to your school.

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
1. Students are represented on the school safety team.					
2. The school provides opportunities for student leadership related to violence prevention and safety issues.					
3. The school provides adequate recognition opportunities for all students.					
4. Students are provided encouragement and support in establishing clubs and programs focused on safety.					
5. Students are adequately instructed in their responsibility to avoid becoming victims of violence, (i.e., by avoiding high-risk situations and seeking help from adults).					
6. Students have the opportunity to participate in a conflict resolution program.					



Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
7. Students have the opportunity to learn about bullying prevention, as well as conflict resolution, the prevention of sexual harassment, and prevention of suicide.					
8. The school provides some form of an anonymous hot line whereby students may report incidents or suspicious activities.					

# BEST PRACTICE TIP



## Opportunities for Student Involvement

- In a school environment, students are often the most underused resource. They are the eyes and ears that can make a difference.
- Schoolyard bullies often have a high propensity for leadership. Consider ways to redirect negative behaviors toward positive leadership opportunities.
- Develop opportunities for cross-age mentoring. Younger students are receptive to both the attention and leadership of older students, and the older students benefit from the added responsibility of modeling appropriate behaviors for their younger peers.
- Encourage and lend support to student groups that advocate peace and non-violence, such as *Students Against Violence Everywhere* (S.A.V.E.)
- Peer mediation programs continue to show evidence of contributing to the reduction of incidents of student-to-student conflict, as well as decreasing administrative time spent on resolving conflicts that students themselves are capable of handling.

## Section 7

# Level of Parent and Community Involvement

### DIRECTIONS:

Use the following checklist to assess the school's current level of safety related to the **level of parent and community involvement**. If an element is in place, check YES. If changes need to be made, check IMPROVE. If the element is not in place, check NO. If the school plans to implement this missing element, check IMPLEMENT. In some cases, an element may be not applicable (N/A) to your school.

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
1. Evidence suggests that the community supports the school's programs and activities that teach safety and nonviolence.					
2. School activities, services, and curricula reflect the characteristics of the students and the community.					
3. School safety planning takes into account the community's crime rate.					
4. Parents are an integral part of the school's safety planning and policy development.					
5. The school informs parents of student behavioral expectations and policy changes in a timely manner.					
6. Parents have access to data to inform them of the school's incidence of crime and violence.					
7. Parents are an integral part of the student discipline procedures and actions.					

<b>Checklist Element</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Implement</b>	<b>Improve</b>
8. The school involves local businesses and other community groups in the safety planning process.					
9. The school communicates with parents regularly about the safe school strategies that are in place.					
10. The school informs the parents about the code of student conduct.					



## **BEST PRACTICE TIP**

### **Parent and Community Involvement**

- Invite parents to participate in the planning and decision-making process for school safety. A sense of ownership fosters a sense of responsibility. Parents are more likely to contribute their time and effort to the school's initiatives if they feel included in the planning process.
- Inform parents about the school's safety policies and programs that have been implemented to prevent violence. Uninformed parents may assume that the school's efforts to address safety issues are inadequate or even non-existent.
- Submit occasional press releases to the local media about the school's safety program. This will foster a compatible working relationship with the media, as well as inform the community about the school's proactive efforts to maintain a safe school environment.
- Work with local businesses to reduce truancy. Students under age 18 who are not involved in a work-study program should not be employed during school hours without appropriate home/school involvement.
- Work with local law enforcement to reduce truancy. Truants often commit incidents of daytime breaking and entering, and truancy is a status offense.
- Establish community service programs as an effective alternative to suspension. Such programs provide meaningful learning experiences for students and an opportunity for community involvement.

## Section 8

# Role of Law Enforcement

### DIRECTIONS:

Use the following checklist to assess the school's current level of safety related to the **role of law enforcement**. If an element is in place, check YES. If changes need to be made, check IMPROVE. If the element is not in place, check NO. If the school plans to implement this missing element, check IMPLEMENT. In some cases, an element may be not applicable (N/A) to your school.

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
1. The school reports incidents of crime and violence to law enforcement officials.					
2. Law enforcement personnel are an integral part of the school's safety planning process.					
3. The school has developed an effective relationship with law enforcement.					
4. The school and local law enforcement have developed a memorandum of agreement, (MOA), defining the roles and responsibilities of both.					
5. Law enforcement personnel provide a visible and regular presence on campus during school hours and at school-related events.					
6. Law enforcement provides after hours patrols of the school site.					

# BEST PRACTICE TIP



## Working with Law Enforcement

- Establish a partnership with local law enforcement officials. Invite law enforcement personnel to participate in the school's safe school planning process. Their expertise is a critical component of the efforts to keep schools safe.
- Inform parents about the role of law enforcement at the school. Without information, parents may assume that a law enforcement presence indicates problems that are out of control, when in fact, police on campus can prevent incidents of violence.
- Develop a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the superintendent and the police chief or sheriff. This MOA should establish a chain of command agreeable to all that will, in turn, clarify roles, responsibilities, and activities focused on maintaining a safe school environment.

## Section 9

# Development of a Crisis Management Plan

### DIRECTIONS:

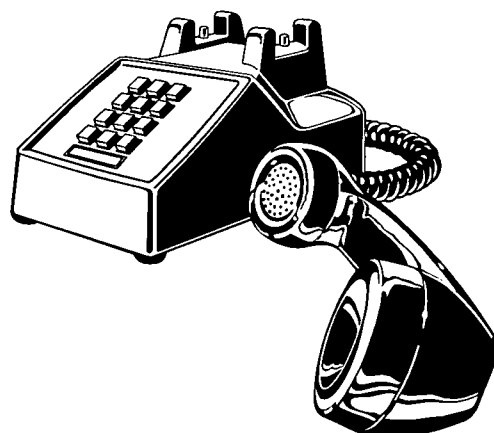
Use the following checklist to assess the school's current level of safety related to the **development of a crisis management plan**. If an element is in place, check YES. If changes need to be made, check IMPROVE. If the element is not in place, check NO. If the school plans to implement this missing element, check IMPLEMENT. In some cases, an element may be not applicable (N/A) to your school.

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
1. The school has developed a crisis management plan.					
2. Categories listed in the plan include, but may not be limited to: natural disasters, bus accidents, bomb threats, natural death, shootings, hostage situations, and suicide.					
3. The school has trained all staff members in the implementation of the crisis management plan.					
4. The crisis management plan includes clear strategies for dealing with the media in the event of a crisis.					
5. The crisis management plan includes a component for post-crisis response, such as the availability of counseling services for students and staff members, dealing with the probability of "copy cat" incidents and dealing with post-traumatic stress.					



Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
6. The school has provided information to parents about the crisis management plan and its implementation.					
7. The school has conducted practice drills to help ensure appropriate implementation of the crisis management plan.					
8. The crisis management plan includes an emergency response plan.					

# BEST PRACTICE TIP



## Bomb Threats

Instruct all personnel, especially anyone who is likely to answer the phones, to follow an established protocol if a bomb threat is reported. This protocol should include, but may not be limited to, the following:

1. Keep the caller on the line as long as possible. Ask him/her to repeat information.
2. If possible, have more than one person listen to the call.
3. Notify the building principal or designee who will immediately dial 911 and notify the SRO, if present in the building.
4. Respond to the caller as calmly as possible.
5. Ask the caller for specific information, such as:
  - location of the bomb?
  - time that bomb will go off?
6. Inform the caller that the building is occupied and that the detonation of a bomb could result in serious injury or death.
7. Pay particular attention to background noises.

The standard response to a bomb threat is immediate evacuation of a building. Whenever possible, however, the principal or designee should confer with law enforcement officials before deciding the best action.

All students and staff members should be advised to report immediately to the principal, the SRO, or the school nurse any suspicious or unusual objects, containers, or packages.

(Excerpt from "Bomb Threats and Physical Security Planning," Department of Treasury and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms)

## Section 10

# Standards for Security Personnel

### DIRECTIONS:

Use the following checklist to assess the school's current level of safety related to the **standards for security personnel**. If an element is in place, check YES. If changes need to be made, check IMPROVE. If the element is not in place, check NO. If the school plans to implement this missing element, check IMPLEMENT. In some cases, an element may be not applicable (N/A) to your school.

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
1. This school employs security personnel (that is, in place of or in addition to School Resource Officers).					
2. The school or school division conducts pre-employment background checks for security personnel.					
3. School security personnel meet the standard for training and qualifications comparable to those outlined in §9-183 of the <i>Code of Virginia</i> .					
4. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities have been established for security personnel.					
5. Security personnel are involved in the school's safe school planning process.					

<b>Checklist Element</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Implement</b>	<b>Improve</b>
6. Security personnel receive training provided by the school or school division related to local school board policy, characteristics of adolescents, and other information relevant to the school environment.					
7. Security personnel are knowledgeable about youth service providers, within the school and the community.					
8. Security personnel have powers of arrest on school property.					

# BEST PRACTICE TIP



## Security Personnel

- Include security personnel in staff training programs that will enhance their level of understanding and skills in dealing with young people. While security personnel bring a certain level of expertise to the school with regard to security issues, they may not have been adequately trained to work effectively with the uniqueness of a school environment.
- Develop collaboration among school staff, security personnel, and School Resource Officers (SROs) who may be on campus. The roles and responsibilities of security personnel and SROs often differ, and the school should establish the parameters that will be conducive to a safe school environment.

## Section 11

# Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Requirements

### DIRECTIONS:

Use the following checklist to assess the school's current level of safety related to the **Americans with Disabilities Act**. If an element is in place, check YES. If changes need to be made, check IMPROVE. If the element is not in place, check NO. If the school plans to implement this missing element, check IMPLEMENT. In some cases, an element may be not applicable (N/A) to your school.

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
1. The school has addressed ADA requirements and has plans for compliance.					
2. The school has considered appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities.					
3. The school has developed an evacuation plan to accommodate students with disabilities in the event of a crisis.					
4. The school's emergency alarm system is in compliance with ADA requirements, taking into consideration students and staff who may be hearing or visually impaired.					
5. In the event of a hostage or intruder event, the school has considered the unique safety needs of students and staff members with disabilities.					

## **BEST PRACTICE TIP**



### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

- Train all staff members with regard to students with special needs and the school's plan to address those needs in the event of a crisis. School officials must consider the safety of all students when developing the school's crisis plan.
- Designate at least two staff members to provide assistance to those special needs students who may require it, should a crisis occur.

## Section 12

# Emergency Response Plan

### DIRECTIONS:

Use the following checklist to assess the school's current level of safety related to the development of an **emergency response plan**. If an element is in place, check YES. If changes need to be made, check IMPROVE. If the element is not in place, check NO. If the school plans to implement this missing element, check IMPLEMENT. In some cases, an element may be not applicable (N/A) to your school.

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
1. The school maintains a current emergency response plan.					
2. The school has provided fire drills and tornado drills for all staff and students.					
3. The school coordinates the plan's maintenance with local law enforcement, Emergency Management Services, and emergency management personnel and conducts an annual review of the plan.					
4. The school has informed parents about the plan's content and implementation.					
5. The plan includes an updated set of the school's layout placed in the following locations: main office, local fire department, local law enforcement office, and local EMS office.					



Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
6. A room, accessible from the exterior and the interior of the building, has been designated as the incident command center in case of an emergency.					
7. A nearby but off-site facility has been identified as an alternate incident command center.					
8. A location, either on school property or nearby, has been designated where the press and parents can report.					
9. Guidelines for working with the media have been established and a school spokesperson has been identified.					
10. The emergency response plan defines the responsibilities of members of the school emergency response team.					
11. Selected staff members have been currently trained in first aid as required by the Code of Virginia.					
12. Evacuation routes within the building are clearly designated.					
13. Bus transportation arrangements are included, should students need to be evacuated to other locations.					
14. Transportation personnel have received training regarding emergency evacuations.					

Checklist Element	Yes	No	N/A	Implement	Improve
15. The emergency response plan reflects the input, expertise, and services of the school nurse.					
16. Emergency evacuation drills (separate from fire drills) have been practiced to familiarize staff members with the plan's implementation.					

# BEST PRACTICE TIP



## Emergency Response Plan

- Develop two emergency response plans: one for the school's response to an emergency and one for the emergency response services (EMS) personnel. Both plans should coordinate, and school officials and EMS personnel should collaborate in the development of the plans.
- Train all school personnel. They should be able to identify members of the school's response team and initiate the school division's established system of triage for extreme medical emergencies.
- In developing an emergency response plan, consider natural disasters, such as hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods and other possible crises, such as shootings, hostage situations or chemical spills.

# Audit Interviews

**Directions:** As part of the on-site visit, audit team members should conduct informal interviews with the administrative staff, selected teachers, and selected students. The purpose of these interviews is to ascertain the information which teachers (and other staff members) and students have regarding the level of safety within the school and to compare perceptions about safety among all users of the school.

## Interview Process Guidelines

- The audit team should arrange to meet with the principal, assistant principal, and other administrative team members upon arrival at the school. At this time, the team should discuss with the administrators the schedule for the day's on-site visit, keeping in mind the importance of minimizing distractions from the day's normal activity as much as possible. The administrators may respond to questions in the interview protocol as part of this initial meeting. This may take 45 minutes to one hour to complete.
- Make arrangements with the school's principal or designee to have a small group of students (four to eight) who represent a cross-section of the school (insofar as possible) meet with the audit team at a time that is least disruptive to the instructional schedule. Schedule approximately 15 minutes—no longer than 30 minutes—to conduct the interview with students.
- Make arrangements with the school's principal or designee to have a small group of teachers (four to eight) meet with the audit team at a time that is least disruptive to the instructional schedule, such as during teachers' planning periods. Schedule approximately 15 minutes—no longer than 30 minutes—to conduct the interview with teachers.
- Be certain to assure interviewees that the audit team will respect confidentiality and will report only information, not individuals' comments.
- It is recommended that the principal receive a copy of the interview questions prior to the on-site visit, with an explanation that the questions will be used as a guide and may not be asked verbatim.

# Administrator's Interview Guideline

1. Is there a School Safety Advisory Committee at the school? Who is represented—staff? students? parents? others? How often does it meet? How would you evaluate its effectiveness?
2. What strategies are in place that you perceive to be most effective in establishing a positive and safe school climate?
3. What alternatives to suspension and expulsion are included in the discipline policy?
4. Is there a visible law enforcement presence at the school? In what way?
5. How are students involved in maintaining a safe school climate?
6. How are students, staff, and parents made aware of the student code of conduct?
7. In general terms, what does the school's data reveal about the level of safety, both during and after regular school hours?
8. How is data used to establish and implement prevention and intervention strategies?
9. To what degree have staff members (including support staff) received training related to safe school issues?
10. If parents express safety concerns, how are these concerns addressed?
11. Is it your perception that students in this school would report to some adult knowledge about potential danger to themselves or to others? To whom would they be most likely to disclose this information?
12. Is there other information about safety issues in this school that you would like to have included as part of this report?

*Thank you for your time and for sharing your thoughts with us.*

# Teacher And Staff Interview Guideline

1. What, if any, are your personal safety concerns at this school?
2. What, if any, locations in the school (or on school grounds) feel unsafe to you?
3. This school year, have you personally or any of your colleagues (to your knowledge) had any personal belongings stolen?
4. This school year, have you personally or any of your colleagues (to your knowledge) been threatened, either verbally, physically, or in writing? If yes, how was the situation handled and was it handled to your satisfaction?
5. How would you assess your level of knowledge about the student code of conduct?
6. This school year, have there been staff development opportunities related to school safety issues? If so, what type of staff development was provided?
7. Are there safety concerns about which you would like to have training? If so, what are they?
8. To your knowledge, have there been weapons or drugs on campus this school year?
9. Are you aware of any gang activity at school?
10. Does your school have in place a conflict mediation program of any kind?
11. In your opinion, do teachers have the benefit of administrative support related to discipline issues?
12. Does this school provide adequate opportunities for positive recognition of all students? If yes, in what ways?
13. Have all staff members been trained in implementing the crisis management plan?
14. Have all staff members been made aware of their legal responsibilities for the enforcement of safety rules, policies, and state and federal laws?

## Teacher/Staff Interview (cont'd)

15. In your opinion, how serious are the following problems at this school?

don't know   no problem   small problem   serious problem

- a. vandalism
- b. gang activity
- c. alcohol use
- d. drug use
- e. tobacco use
- f. drug selling
- g. weapons
- h. bullying
- i. physical fights
- j. conflict among  
diverse ethnic  
groups
- k. respect for adults
- l. respect for students

16. Is there a school safety issue that, in your opinion, is not being adequately addressed to eliminate the problem? Do you have recommendations for addressing the issue?

*Thank you for your time and for sharing your thoughts with us.*

# **Student Interview Guideline**

## **(middle and high school students)\***

1. Are there any places in this building or any times of the day when you feel unsafe? If so, explain.
2. This school year, have you been physically harmed at school? If so, what was the extent of your injuries?
3. Are you aware of any of your fellow students having been harmed at school, this school year?
4. This school year, have you—or do you know of any of your friends—who have been threatened or bullied? If so, what was the school's response to the situation?
5. To your knowledge, are there weapons in this school building or on school grounds? sometimes? never?
6. To your knowledge, are there drugs in this school building or on school grounds? sometimes? never?
7. Have you ever seen alcohol or other drugs being used, bought, or sold at the school? sometimes? never?
8. If you knew that there was the potential for danger or harm being done to yourself or others at this school, would you tell some adult about this? If so, to whom would you go? If not, why not?
9. Do the teachers and principals in this school encourage students to report incidents of harassment, bullying, threats, etc.? Is there a process in place for doing so?
10. Are you aware of any gang activity at this school? If so, do you believe this presents any danger to yourself or to others at this school? Why or why not?
11. Do students who get into fights get help in learning how to resolve conflicts without fighting?
12. Are there programs in this school to help students whose grades are failing?
13. Have students been encouraged to establish clubs and activities with a safety focus?
14. Have students had any training in personal safety and how to avoid becoming victims of violence?



## **Student Interview Protocol (cont'd.)**

15. Does this school have any groups of students that "run" the school?

16. In your opinion, how serious are the following problems in your school?

don't know    no problem    small problem    serious problem

- a. vandalism
- b. gang activity
- c. alcohol use
- d. drug use
- e. tobacco use
- f. drug selling
- g. weapons
- h. bullying
- i. physical fights
- j. conflict among  
different groups
- k. respect for teachers
- l. respect for students

17. Is there a safety issue that, in your opinion, is not being adequately addressed to eliminate the problem? Do you have any recommendations for ways to address the issue?

***Thank you for your time and for sharing your thoughts with us.***

\*These questions can be adapted for elementary students.

22.1-278.1

## School safety audits and school crisis and emergency management plans required

A. For the purpose of this section, unless the context requires otherwise:

"School crisis and emergency management plan" means the essential procedures, operations, and assignments required to prevent, manage, and respond to a critical event or emergency, including natural disasters involving fire, flood, or severe weather; loss or disruption of power, water, communications or shelter; bus or other accidents; medical emergencies; student or staff member deaths; explosions; bomb threats; gun, knife or other weapons threats; spills or exposures to hazardous substances; the presence of unauthorized persons or trespassers; the loss, disappearance or kidnapping of a student; hostage situations; violence on school property or at school activities; and other incidents posing a serious threat of harm to students, personnel, or facilities.

"School safety audit" means a written assessment of the safety conditions in each public school to (i) identify and, if necessary, develop solutions for physical safety concerns, including building security issues and (ii) identify and evaluate any patterns of student safety concerns occurring on school property or at school-sponsored events. Solutions and responses may include recommendations for structural adjustments, changes in school safety procedures, and revisions to the school board's standards for student conduct.

- B. The superintendent of public instruction shall develop a list of items to be reviewed and evaluated in the school safety audits required by this section. Each local school board shall require all schools under its supervisory control to conduct school safety audits as defined in this section and consistent with such list. Each school shall maintain a copy of the school safety audit within the office of the school principal and shall make a copy of such report available upon written request.
- C. The school board may establish a school safety audit committee to consist of representatives of parents, teachers, local law-enforcement agencies, judicial and public safety personnel, and the community-at-large. The school safety audit committee shall evaluate, in accordance with the directions of the local school board, the safety of each school and submit a plan for improving school safety at a public meeting of the local school board.
- D. Each school board shall ensure that every school it supervises shall develop a written school crisis and emergency management plan, consistent with the definition provided in this section. The Department of Education shall provide technical assistance to the school divisions of the Commonwealth in the development of the school crisis and emergency management plans.

Upon consultation with local school boards and division superintendents, the Board of Education shall develop, and may revise as it deems necessary, a model school crisis and emergency management plan for the purpose of assisting the public schools in Virginia in developing viable, effective crisis and emergency plans.

Virginia Department of Education  
**SCHOOL SAFETY AUDIT CERTIFICATION**

Division Name \_\_\_\_\_

Division Superintendent \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person (if other than Superintendent) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Audit Visit \_\_\_\_\_

This is to certify to the Virginia Department of Education that a school safety audit at (school name) \_\_\_\_\_ has been completed in accordance with §22.1-278.1 of the Code of Virginia. This further certifies that the audit report is on file at the school site and that the recommendations of the audit team will be considered.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Superintendent's Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Date)

Please mail or FAX to:

Marsha Owens  
 Virginia Department of Education  
 P.O. Box 2120  
 Richmond, VA 23218  
 FAX: (804) 371-8796



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