



San Diego Unified School District

Fact Sheet

Emergency Response

Since 1999, California law has required that each school's principal write and maintain a School Safety Plan. School Police Services have thoroughly trained all school principals in emergency response procedures. Videotapes were produced and distributed for training all new school staff.

In 2000, Police Services implemented **Crisis Response Boxes (CRB)** at each of our school sites and all child development centers. Each **CRB** contains a comprehensive school safety plan for all emergency responses and is kept by each principal. In an emergency, the principal or trained designee opens and follows the instructions in the **CRB**.

The safety plan is revised annually by the principal and is reviewed by the police services office. Every year, a team comprised of the principal, vice-principal, teachers, students and two (2) parents review and edit the plan. A copy is stored at the front desk for parental and/or staff review. Each parent/guardian is allowed to review the safety plan and give his or her input to the principal at any time.

Each **CRB** contains a Quick Reference Guide for Emergencies, student roster lists separated by grade, updated maps, disaster plans, evacuation routes, staging locations, aerial campus photographs, crime data, and other pertinent information required by law. Each principal is responsible for having two (2) copies at their school site.

Depending on the emergency, each principal must designate two off-site locations where students are directed if necessary. Students are supervised by a trained team of school staff and are not permitted to leave without school consent. Reunification is the process in which students are

either dismissed to a parent/guardian or allowed to re-enter the school after the site is deemed safe. Currently, specially appointed district staff are being trained as Reunification Teams who will be called to enter the off-site location and orchestrate the reunification process by grade level. At this point, parents will be asked to sign a release form for their children. In the event of an emergency, the media will be used to advise parents and the community of the reunification site and steps to follow until phone calls can be made to parents.

Principals, vice principals, and designated staff have undergone extensive emergency incident training sessions in emergency preparedness, crisis and critical incident management, staff training on safety plan implementation, threat assessment, evacuation, and reunification strategies. By the end of school year 2003, Police Services will choose nine (9) random schools to test and evaluate each school's emergency preparedness. A report will be generated with suggestions for improvement.

In fall 2002, the **Emergency Operations Center (EOC)** was initiated according to state standards. The EOC is activated whenever a school or district site is evacuated to an off-site location. Its purpose is to coordinate and track parent/guardian notification, including the strong collaborative working relationships with city, county, state, and federal agencies.

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SUMMARY

- ❖ **The #1 priority for School Police and school staff is the safety of all students and staff.**
- ❖ **During a school emergency, students are generally safest at their school sites.**
- ❖ **Parents need to keep calm and in control.**
- ❖ **Parents should carry their children's school number(s) with them at all times.**
- ❖ **Parents should update the schools with their cell phone numbers for emergencies.**
- ❖ **Media will be used to advise parents of the reunification site and steps to follow until phone calls can be made to parents.**
- ❖ **During a community-wide emergency, the media will be used to publish a Hotline number activated for parents and students to use in answering their questions.**



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Additional efforts among Intervention, Counseling and Guidance Services, Risk Management, the Office of Instructional Support, Communications and Community Relations, and Parent Involvement provide continuous changes and improvements in emergency preparedness.

The Health Services Department updated and implemented the **Crisis Intervention Plan**. It provides comprehensive and systematic responses in the event of actual district or school crises. Immediate intervention and factual information are the key elements in providing support to affected persons and returning the school to an as-normal-as-possible operation. A school **CRT - Crisis Response Team** is especially established to serve as the initial contact and information source. Each principal or its designee is responsible for managing its **CRT**. All principals are instructed to develop a site intervention plan, which outlines immediate steps to follow in a crisis at their school.

The Counseling and Guidance Department provides support and resources to parents and their children. Counselors are assigned to each school as well as being integral members of the Site Crisis Response Team. District Crisis Response Team members are extensively trained in the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) model, which trains them how to support and respond to students, staff, and the community in a traumatic situation. During an emergency, the District Crisis Response Team may be activated to assist a school to deal with each crisis.

If you believe that your child needs additional counseling and guidance, call your school's counselor first. Make an appointment or schedule a time to talk about your concerns. They will advise you and make referrals to outside agencies when appropriate.

Remember that our own attitudes set the atmosphere in dealing with each emergency. Be calm and reassuring.

In an emergency, talk to your children and tell them:

- They are safe in spite of the emergency
- Levels of security have been increased due to high awareness standards in San Diego
- Levels of prevention efforts have been increased
- Remind them that time helps to heal all wounds

Remember to:

- Be supportive and provide reassurance
- Ask your children to express their feelings
- Be a good listener and acknowledge their feelings

Contact Information: Police Services Department: Administration - (619) 725-7000
Dispatch - (619) 291-7678

www.sandi.net
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