

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

April 10, 2007

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: B. Holt, Acting Superintendent

SUBJECT: Practices and Policies Related to School Security

ORIGINATOR: R. MacNeil, Executive Director

RESOURCE

STAFF: Lisa Austin; Jenise Bidulock; Fred Buffi; John Nicoll; Karen Patterson; David Piercey; Doug Savary; Larry Schwenneker; Cory Sinclair; Lesley Sonnen; Don Ward

INFORMATION

The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of Trustees about the practices and policies related to school security and emergency preparedness. School Security is an element of emergency preparedness. Security begins at the school with appropriate procedures, staff situational awareness, training and security drills with assigned responsibilities. The district cannot make a school secure in and of itself. School security requires a staff with a focus on safety and the well being of staff and students. This can be accomplished through a combination of an up-to-date emergency preparedness plan for the school, security procedures and internal procedures such as mandatory sign-ins at the administration office, identification badges for staff and visitors and regular checks of high risk areas in the school such as washrooms and hidden spaces.

It is important to recognize that Edmonton Public Schools deals with incidents at schools on a daily basis which include security alerts, missing children, issues with non-custodial parents, unreasonable parents, student hoaxes, student behavior issues, security issues within adjacent neighborhoods, intruders and other threats related to school security.

Properly dealing with incidents that threaten the safety of students, staff, volunteers and visitors to the school is embodied with the district priority 'to achieve high standards of citizenship, conduct, safety and well being of students and staff'.

In accordance with Board Policy EBC.BP "the safety of school students and staff is the direct responsibility of the Principal. Emergency plans such as are necessary to ensure the safety of students and staff in the event of an emergency, are to be in place and practiced"(Appendix D). There are several other district policies and regulations which support school security and these policies and regulations are listed in Appendix II.

The principal of the school has many district resources available to help fulfill this responsibility and this report will outline some of the many resources available to the principal.

DISTRICT EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TEAM

Facilities Services-Security, Leadership Services, Consulting Services, Communications, Occupational Health and Safety and Planning/Student Transportation form the District Emergency Response Team that provides services to schools in emergent situations.

FACILITIES SERVICES SECURITY

Facilities Services works closely with schools to enhance security of staff, students, volunteers and visitors at the school through the provision of the following services.

On Site Response

Facilities Services-Security provides on-site assistance during emergent situations at schools or when requested by schools to do so, depending on the seriousness of the situation at the school and the level of assistance required by the school.

Emergency Preparedness

On a regular basis, the district faces emergency situations such as medical issues, missing children, or severe weather, intruders, inappropriate activity, unruly parents, etc. District schools have a legal requirement to have an emergency preparedness plan in place for their school. Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) legislation (Appendix III) requires that all organizations must have emergency preparedness plans that adapt to the current environment. Facilities Services-Security provides uniform templates to schools to assist in meeting this requirement. Facilities Services-Security is currently reviewing individual school emergency preparedness plans and providing feedback to the schools on possible improvements to their plans.

School Security Reviews

Schools security reviews are conducted by trained Facilities Services-Security staff using a process called CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design). CPTED is a North American crime prevention strategy that focuses on the relationship between the building environment and incidence of crime. The most attractive feature of this strategy is that it strives to ensure a high level of personal security without imposing a fortress like structure on the environment. More information of CPTED principles and practices are contained in Appendix IV.

24/7 Call Center

A 24/7 Call Center is located within Facilities Services in the Centre for Education. This call center serves all of the district schools and monitors the opening and closing of schools, fire alarms, intrusion alarms, panic alarms as well as reported gas leaks. This center also receives calls and activates the necessary district resources to deal with calls related to missing students, security alerts, threats, threatening parents and any other matters related to emergency preparedness and security of schools.

Facilities Services-Maintenance

Facilities Services-Maintenance staff are available on a 24/7 basis to respond to emergent situations at district schools whether it is responding to a gas leak at the school, boarding a school up after hours due to vandalism or a break and enter or responding to maintenance emergencies.

LEADERSHIP SERVICES

Leadership Services provides advice and assistance to support principals, school personnel and parents when a critical issue is reported. Through the district Alert E-mail system Leadership Services is able to inform and keep current personnel in the Superintendent's office, Board Office, Security and the Communications departments of emerging and ongoing situations. Dependent on the support needed Leadership Services also initiates involvement of Consulting Services Critical Incident Support Team.

CONSULTING SERVICES

The Consulting Services Critical Incident Support Team provides short term counseling support to students during traumatic events that affect student well being. This service is provided by district psychologists and social workers upon request from the school.

COMMUNICATIONS

When the district or an individual school is faced with an issue or crisis the Communications Department provides a variety of support to help principals, senior administration and the Board of Trustees deal with the situation. The support provided may include on-site assistance. Communications helps the school or district to provide current, accurate information about the situation.

The support services provided by Communications may include:

- Advice (suggesting communication strategies to the principal, superintendent or Board Chair);
- Information dissemination (preparing letters to parents, media releases, website updates, key messages and briefing notes);
- Media relations (coordinating interviews with the media, preparing the district spokesperson or serving as the district spokesperson)

Staff from Communications work with representatives from other departments as part of a coordinated district response to the issue or crisis.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

If an emergent situation at the school relates directly to district personnel Occupational Health and Safety personnel respond.

PLANNING AND STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

Planning staff are available to provide support in the re-location of students, if necessary, as a result of an evacuation at the school site. If transportation services are required as a result of an emergent situation they would be provided by Student Transportation; or alternatively the City of Edmonton transportation services.

EDMONTON POLICE SERVICE

The district works closely with the Edmonton Police Service. Edmonton Public Schools is partnered in the School Resource Officer program with Edmonton Police Service and Edmonton Catholic Schools. More information on the School Resource Officer and the School Liaison programs is found in Appendix V.

NEXT STEPS:

Facilities Services-Emergency Preparedness and Security will expand the time and resources required in the area of training and in-servicing of school staff which will assist schools in being more pro-active in dealing with emergent situations and security matters at the school level. The level to which this initiative can be developed will of course depend on the level of financial resources that are available.

The district will continue to foster relationships and develop closer liaisons with Calgary Board of Education (Security Services), Edmonton Police Service, City of Edmonton, Capital Health (including Pandemic Planning), Edmonton Catholic Schools and the Francophone School Board.

CONCLUSION:

Ultimately schools are responsible for the safety of the staff and students. School staff need to keep school security measures in place and have to remain vigilant in administering these protocols such as sign-in logs for visitors to the schools, identification badges for staff and visitors to the school, keeping doors locked and monitoring of washrooms, hallways and low use areas of the school. The school's challenge is to balance off security needs of the school while at the same time not provide a fortress like environment at the school. One of the most effective and appropriate security measures a school can provide is an alert staff who have the co-operation of well trained students and informed parents and community members, supported by the resources of the district outlined in this report.

This report outlined the many district resources that are available to schools to fulfill their responsibility in keeping their school sites safe for their students, staff, volunteers and visitors.

LS:lh

- Appendix I - Policy EBC.BP Emergency Plans
- Appendix II - Policies and Regulations
- Appendix III - Occupational and Health Act-Part 7-Emergency Preparedness and Response
- Appendix IV - Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)
- Appendix V - School Resource Officer and School Liaison Officer programs

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Edmonton Public Schools Board Policies and Regulations

CODE: EBC.BP
TOPIC: Emergency Plans

EFFECTIVE DATE: 11-01-2000
ISSUE DATE: 13-01-2000
REVIEW DATE: 01-2005

The safety of school students and staff is the direct responsibility of the Principal. Emergency plans such as are necessary to ensure the safety of students and staff in the event of an emergency, are to be in place and practised.

Reference(s):

[ECA.BP](#) - Security and Vandalism

[EBC.AR](#) - Operation of Schools Under Unusual Circumstances

[EBBA.AR](#) - Fire Hazard Regulations

Policies and Regulations Related to Facilities Services-Emergency Preparedness and Security

EBBA.AR	Fire Hazard Regulations
EBC.BP	Emergency Plans
EBCB.AR	Fire and Fire Drill Procedures
EBC.AR	Operation of Schools Under Unusual Circumstances
EBCC.AR	Bomb Threats
ECA.BP	Security and Vandalism
ECAD.AR	Security and Vandalism
IHFA.AR	Supervision of Students

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Part 7 Emergency Preparedness and Response

Emergency response plan

- 115(1)** An employer must establish an emergency response plan for responding to an emergency that may require rescue or evacuation.
- (2) An employer must consult with affected workers in establishing the emergency response plan.
- (3) An employer must ensure that an emergency response plan is current.

Contents of plan

- 116** An emergency response plan must include the following:
- (a) the identification of potential emergencies;
 - (b) procedures for dealing with the identified emergencies;
 - (c) the identification of, location of and operational procedures for emergency equipment;
 - (d) the emergency response training requirements;
 - (e) the location and use of emergency facilities;
 - (f) the fire protection requirements;
 - (g) the alarm and emergency communication requirements;
 - (h) the first aid services required;
 - (i) procedures for rescue and evacuation;
 - (j) the designated rescue and evacuation workers.

Rescue and evacuation workers

- 117(1)** An employer must designate the workers who will provide rescue services and supervise evacuation procedures in an emergency.
- (2) An employer must ensure that designated rescue and emergency workers are trained in emergency response appropriate to the work site and the potential emergencies identified in the emergency response plan.
- (3) The training under subsection (2) must include exercises appropriate to the work site that simulate the potential emergencies identified in the emergency response plan.
- (4) The training exercises referred to in subsection (3) must be repeated at the intervals required to ensure that the designated rescue and evacuation workers are competent to carry out their duties.

Equipment

- 118(1)** An employer must provide workers designated under section 117 with personal protective clothing and equipment appropriate to the work site and the potential emergencies identified in the emergency response plan.
- (2) Workers who respond to an emergency must wear and use personal protective clothing and equipment appropriate to the work site and the emergency.

CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED)

CPTED is based on the premise that 'proper design and effective use' of the built in environment can lead to a reduction in the incidence and fear of crime and an improvement in the quality of life. The 3 main principles of CPTED are:

1. Natural Surveillance
2. Access Control
3. Territoriality

-Natural Surveillance - any architectural design that enhances the chance that a potential offender will be, or might be seen, is a form of natural surveillance. The opportunity for crime can be deterred if the offender thinks they will be seen. Improved sight lines and adequate lighting are examples of achieving natural surveillance.

-Access Control - is a strategy used to deny access to a location where surveillance and monitoring is not available. It mainly focuses on entry and exit points of the school.

-Territoriality is all about claiming ownership of one's own property and thereby defining changes from public space to semi-private to private space. This will make it less likely that a person who does not belong in a place will use it to commit criminal or nuisance behavior in that location.

Crime often congregates in areas where there are dilapidated, uncared for and abandoned buildings, in places where litter and graffiti are rampant, and where the area looks like no one cares. CPTED tries to eliminate such places through the use of Natural Surveillance, Access Control and Territoriality.

Senior and Junior High School Resource Officers (SRO) Program

This collaborative partnership between Edmonton Public Schools, Edmonton Catholic Schools and Edmonton Police Service recognizes the importance and strength of supporting and encouraging initiatives within school communities directed to keeping schools safe.

A school resource officer (SRO) is a uniformed Edmonton Police Service Constable who is specifically assigned to a school or group of schools. A list of Edmonton Public Schools with SRO is attached.

The primary function of the SRO is to provide a safe learning environment for the students and staff assigned to their schools and attached feeder schools. SRO's work cooperatively with school administrators, staff, students, parents and the community to proactively identify and address school concerns or problems by keeping open lines of communication. SRO's enforce the law/statutes and conduct investigations as the need arises and prevent crime by being a visible law enforcement presence in the schools. SRO's also take a pro-active approach to crime prevention in schools by counseling, structured class presentations, lectures, continual interaction, mentoring and distribution of educational resource materials.

SRO's are available to junior high schools for proactive duties only. The first commitment is to the assigned high school and availability to the junior high schools is on a time permitting basis.

The Senior High Resource Officer Program differs from the Junior High Resource Officer Program. One SRO is shared between four junior high schools. Of these four schools, two are Edmonton Public Schools and two are Edmonton Catholic Schools, both on the Northside and Southside of Edmonton. Each school has one full day of SRO assistance.

Junior High School Liaison Officer SLO Program

The position of SLO is a partnership between Edmonton Police Service, Edmonton Public Schools and Edmonton Catholic Schools. A new delivery model for the School Liaison Officer (SLO) has been initiated to serve a total of fifteen Edmonton Public and Catholic Junior High Schools. This pilot model has been created to support educational initiatives within schools and to keep schools safe. This project will educate students in respect to problems they may encounter and assist participants in working toward positive solutions. This pilot project runs from September 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007.

SLO's perform several roles. The main role of the SLO is to devise proactive and preventative measures that raise student awareness and change behaviors. SLO's also act as a liaison between Edmonton Catholic Schools, Edmonton Public Schools and Edmonton Police Service in responding to or dealing with criminal and public order issues. The focus of the SLO is to improve the safety and well being of all students and staff within the school environment by increasing the feeling of safety through prevention, education and intervention.

The School Liaison Officer position is different from the School Resource Officer position as the emphasis on the SLO program is on encouraging creative and responsible alternatives to charging a student. The SLO will also involve other resources in providing a timely response to inappropriate student behaviors.

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