CODES OF SAFE PRACTICES – SECURITY OFFICERS

With the passage of SB 1626 in 1998, state law will soon require security guards in K-12 school districts or California community college districts to complete a course of training developed by BSIS. The new law takes effect July 1, 2000, and affects guards working on school property for more than 20 hours per week. The new training requirement affects only guards employed pursuant to a contract between a K-12 school district or California community college district and a private patrol operator.

Personal Security

A. Pay attention to your surroundings. Stay in well-lighted areas and use the Buddy System (2 people walking or working together). Have your keys and flashlight ready and be aware of your surroundings as you go. Have a working cell phone nearby and alert others as to when they can expect you back at base.

B. Use good judgment. Only approach unwanted visitors when you feel comfortable that you have communicated with your base and that you understand the nature of the risk of contact. Don’t hesitate to call for additional campus security assistance.

C. Avoid physical confrontation if at all possible. Physical intervention should be the last resort. Avoid physically intervening in school fights or arguments. Use your voice to command and control the combatants. You may become the target and a victim. Request help via radio, cell phone or send a student to obtain additional adult assistance. Crowd dispersal is a key component to avoiding escalation.

Threat Recognition

A. Be aware of restraining orders against custodial and non-custodial adults. Preferably, request a picture to accompany the name.

B. All threats must be treated seriously. Be aware of your standard protocol for assessing, investigating and documenting threats. Written statements should be obtained from threat makers, witnesses and the targets of threats. The actions taken by administrators to address each threat should also be documented. Report any aggressive notes or letters from students to the administration and security supervisors.

C. Disgruntled current and former employees, suspended and expelled students, irate parents, job applicants, and other high-risk individuals are very likely to attend hearings, meetings, and visits. Be alert for these individuals and report them to the security office.

D. Suspicious activity may include suspicious vehicles on and around campus, suspicious persons in and around school buildings including those taking photographs or videotaping, suspicious packages around the building perimeter and/or in the school, and suspicious information seeking efforts by phone or by unknown “visitors”.


Security Management Procedures

All threats must be treated seriously and you should be familiar with your District protocol for assessing, investigating and documenting threats. Written statements should be obtained from threat makers, witnesses and the targets of threats. The actions taken by administrators to address each threat should also be documented.

Security administrators should develop and use questions similar to those above to evaluate each threat, rather than relying on checklists of profiling characteristics or personality traits. A review of the threat maker’s past disciplinary and psychological record should be made as a part of the evaluation process. In addition to disciplinary action consistent with school policies, police also should be involved when appropriate.

School district administration offices typically house the offices of the superintendent, board members, personnel department, treasurer, special education staff, and student services hearing officers and staff. The ever-increasing political nature of school board meetings, and for that matter school politics in general, often draws a presence and attention to school administration offices and the individuals housed in these offices. It is not uncommon for highly charged meetings and emotional issues to result in escalated undesirable and threatening behavior.

Security Supervisor Management Controls

A number of measures can be taken to reduce administration office safety threats. These include, but are not limited to:

1. Security personnel should know the threat assessment protocol that applies not only to dealing with threats made by and/or to students, but also to threats made to school administrators and office staff. (A number of cases have been documented where threats have been made to harm building administrators as well as district-level coordinators, supervisors, directors, and even superintendents.)
2. Include administration offices, both at the building and district levels, in school security assessments conducted for your district.
3. Develop crisis guidelines for school administration sites as would be done for actual school buildings
4. Train administrators and school office staff (including secretaries and receptionists) on appropriate security policies and procedures, threat assessment and management, office safety measures, and district crisis guidelines and proper security reporting procedures.
5. Incorporate crime prevention into school office layouts and central office designs, including in reception areas, secretarial offices, and inside administrative offices and meeting rooms
6. Evaluate methods for reducing and controlling access to district central offices and support facilities
7. Establish basic procedures for conducting potentially high-risk meetings and hearings
8. Assess physical security measures, including the use of security technology, for reducing administration office safety risks and for preparing to manage incidents of crime and violence in office settings
9. Evaluate the contents, in addition the layout, of administration offices, as well as communication methods that would be used in a threatening situation
Reducing After-School and Weekend Risks

Wide open doors and facilities, limited (if any) supervision, and leaving the school on “auto pilot” create security concerns. Security officials should explore ways to reduce risks and to prepare for managing those incidents that cannot be prevented. Some specific steps to consider might include:

1. Reduce the number of open doors that are accessible to outsiders once the normal school day has ended. (Of course, reduced access should also be a part of daytime school security procedures, too.)
2. Concentrate (as best possible) after-school and weekend activities in limited areas of the building. If at all possible, avoid having activities spread out all over the school. If you do have multiple activities taking place, evaluate security-staffing needs and try to identify ways to contain the activities to their designated areas. Gate-off sections of the building not being used for after-school activities in accordance with fire code standards and good common sense.

Response Protocols

1. Responding to threat of physical assault by fighting students
   a. Security will check to make sure radio equipment is in proper operating condition.
   b. Security will communicate with other Security in order to assess response needs.
   c. At least one Security Officer will provide assistance in case of threat of physical assault. Security will assess need to contact local police services and promptly notify base of his/her situation and recommendations.
   d. In all cases involving student confrontation, Security will clear the classroom, playground or other areas of all non-participating students before addressing confrontation.
   e. Security should attempt to identify non-aggressive student and remove him/her from area to diffuse situation.
   f. In cases involving weapons, Security will immediately notify base. They in turn will notify police services.
   g. Security personnel will work together to control and contain situation by isolating student with weapon until assistance arrives.

2. Responding to threat by non-student
   a. All Security will be on constant alert for non-students entering campus grounds. While patrolling assigned areas, Security will make sure all outside doors are locked and are in good operating condition.
   b. Security will report situation to base and other Security Officers and will use his/her best judgment in recommending to base whether police services should be contacted.
   c. Security will take initiative in preventing non-students from entering school grounds by approaching non-students before they enter campus. If already on campus, Security will be courteous in asking non-student to leave and will escort non-student off campus. If necessary, Security will exercise reasonable force in escorting non-student off campus.
   d. Security will remain in continual contact with base and other Security officers regarding whereabouts of non-students, number of non-students, description, direction and whether non-student is armed.
e. For schools with closed campus at lunchtime, Security will maintain student control by restricting students to a central area such as a playground.

3. **Patrols playground, school buildings, offices, hallways, cafeteria and restrooms.**
   a. Prior to commencing patrol of assigned area, Security will check to make sure radio equipment is in proper operating condition.
   b. Security will keep assigned area clean and free of debris and foreign substances; and will report hazards to supervisor and custodial staff.
   c. In case of fire, earthquake, chemical spill or other emergency requiring evacuation, Security will promptly notify office (base), and supervise assigned area for safe evacuation of all staff and students.
   d. Security will keep exits open during school hours and conduct inspections to verify ability to easily exit.
   e. Security will inspect alarm system to determine that system is operable.

**Safety Tips When dealing with angry individuals:**
- Apologize for inconvenience.
- Control your emotions.
- Empathize or sympathize with the individual.
- Ignore sarcasm/personal attacks.
- Never argue with the individual.
- Offer assistance.
- Never accuse the individual.
- Call for help when necessary.

**Safety Tips/Internal Violence**
- Try to calm angry individual by talking
- Empathize/sympathize
- Ask if you can help
- Understand angry individual's position
- Focus on individual’s behavior
- Call for help when necessary

**Safety Tips/External Violence**
- Don’t open door to stranger after business hours
- Notify base if working late
- Don’t let a caller know you are alone
- Report suspicious characters to police services
- Build a rapport with police services
- Use the “buddy system”
Preparing for Workplace Violence Summary

- Verbal threats are as serious as physical threats
- Don’t ignore violent or angry outbursts
- Stress and conflict can cause a violent incident
- Protect yourself and be cautious
- Report acts of violence no matter how small
- Don’t treat threats lightly
- Make sure your radio is fully charged
- Have 911 hotline procedures
- Don’t freeze
- Watch for warning signs
- Know your location

Conduct

You are in the public eye. In your official duties, your actions reflect upon you, the school, and the school district. Be helpful and courteous at all times. Conduct yourself as a professional.

I  Attitude

Your attitude will largely determine your success in gaining the cooperation of the motoring public, your co-workers and supervisor, children and parents. Courtesy cannot be over emphasized. Be courteous and helpful even under adverse conditions. DO NOT assume an overbearing manner in your contacts with the general public or schoolchildren.

II  Attention to Your Duties

The lives of school children are in your hands. Attention to the duties and responsibilities of your position is required at all times.

III  Personal Interest

Show a personal interest in your work by learning and using the names of as many children and parents as possible. Using names may help promote a positive attitude with the general public and will help when giving directions to schoolchildren.

IV  Equipment

Make sure your equipment is in good working condition and fully charged. Be familiar with its proper function and maintenance.

V  Appearance

Dress to suit weather conditions. Your appearance must be neat and clean at all times when on duty. A slovenly appearance results in a loss of public respect. Remember you are in the public eye.
Personal Safety Rules

A. **Focus your attention on students.** In order to avoid begin injured your attention must be focused on the students you are supervising. Don’t engage in a lengthy conversation with other employees or individual students. A stray ball could hit you. Be prompt and efficient when dealing with disciplinary matters. Don’t let the problem student distract you too long from the majority of students.

B. **Position yourself for the widest, safest view.** You want to take a position in the area you are working that affords you the best view for supervising the greatest number of students. Don’t let trees; walls, or other obstacles obstruct your view. Don’t take a position with your back to students engaged in a playground activity, especially those involving throwing objects.

C. **Don’t engage in play activities with students.** If you are engaged in playing with a group of students you could be injured by an activity of another group of student, and other students may be without supervision.

D. **Be aware of safety hazards.** Play areas and equipment should be safety inspected, but there may be slip, trip, or fall hazards in the area you are working. Watch your step. Report safety hazards to your supervisor immediately.

E. **Scan your area of responsibility.** Once you have positioned yourself appropriately, visually scan the area you are responsible for securing and supervising. This will help keep you alert.

**Remember, keeping alert and aware of what is going on in the area you are supervising is not only your job, but will also help you avoid being injured.**

For additional information, contact the [National Association of School Resource Officers](http://www.nasro.org)