

**ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES FOR SHEFFIELD - SHEFFIELD LAKE CITY  
PREVENTING AND SCHOOLS**

**REACTING TO A SUDDEN AND  
DANGEROUS / RANDOM**

**SHEFFIELD, OHIO**

**JANUARY 1999**

**VIOLENT CRISIS SITUATION**

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# I. RATIONALE

“Nowhere is there sanctuary from the random acts of violence in American life, not even in the schools. Educators dare not become complacent about school security in the naïve belief that violence can’t happen here.” Schools have prided themselves in being open, accessible, public institutions. Having recent publicized events in Colorado, Pearl, Mississippi; Paducah, Kentucky; Jonesboro, Arkansas; and Springfield, Oregon where eleven children were killed follows the local killing tragedy at Wickliffe, Middle School, Wickliffe, Ohio. This local incident remains a memory in the minds of most Greater Clevelanders. While parents, students, school staff, and citizens have a newfound concern for safety, they continue to expect to be able to come and go safely from school grounds and buildings in the face of increased notoriety of violence in schools. The ability to insure this safety has increasingly been a public institutional challenge that requires the cooperation of everyone.

The issues are clear: 1) What is the best way to provide a safe, secure school without it being overly restrictive and prison-like? 2) What is the safest manner to respond in the case of an unfortunate dangerous / violent situation?

Responding to the issues requires employing a multi-phased approach to building security that includes prevention and reaction to handling a sudden and dangerous / violent situation. Proactive prevention includes 1) education 2) generating a sense of community 3) creating an “action plan” 4) implementing/enforcing security measures. Reactive action requires 1) identifying the potential threat 2) responding to the dangerous/ violent situation 3) carrying out an “action plan” 4) following up to the dangerous/ violent situation.

In dealing with both proactive and reactive situations, there are very few absolutes (if any) since schools, communities, and personnel differ greatly in culture, resources, and vulnerability. As a national security expert stated, “If you think this sounds a little bit nebulous, it’s because, quite simply, there are no easy answers.” A security program that might be appropriate for one district and / or school might not be appropriate for another. With this in mind, the following are guiding principles that have been applied in generating **administrative guidelines** for **preventing** and **handling sudden and dangerous randomly violent situations** in the Sheffield-Sheffield Lake City Schools.



## II. PRINCIPLES FOR SCHOOL SECURITY

1. Prepare and review school security before a crisis situation exists.
2. Involve law enforcement in creating and / or reviewing a security plan, and maintain a reciprocal working relationship and dialogue with the local police department.
3. Plan to be both proactive and reactive. Include both a preventive and crisis action plan.
4. Create guidelines and procedures that can be particularized to a specific school setting and / or situation.
5. Make security everyone's business. Focus on the concept that it takes the cooperation and diligence of everyone to have an effective school security plan.
6. Highlight the importance of responsible and accurate communication in both prevention and in the reaction to a crisis situation.

### III. SUDDEN AND DANGEROUS RANDOM / VIOLENT CRISIS SITUATIONS

Any situation in which an individual has or is **believed to have a weapon** (firearm, knife, explosive) in school, on school grounds or at a school event /activity is a dangerous event. A dangerous situation also includes the witnessing of **active** trafficking of drugs, unauthorized forced entry when a building is occupied and gang-like activity that includes **active** threats, intimidation and/or violence. The presence of a rabid animal or a building / local area environmental disaster (e.g. chemicals, toxic air) may also create a dangerous situation.

Any incident in which an individual takes or intends to take a hostage(s), kidnap a student(s), / employee(s), or demonstrates irrational, bizarre, violent, threatening behavior. A sudden, randomly violent situation includes, but is not limited to A criminal fleeing from police and entering school grounds/ building. A parent / guardian making demands and acting violently (with or without a weapon) in an unauthorized attempt to take a child from classroom / school is also dangerous. A deranged individual, terrorist(s), or “person(s) with a cause” seizing a student(s) / employee(s) as a hostage(s). Anyone making irrational demands and / or acting out violently (with or without a weapon) needs to be addressed. It also includes students and employees acting or demonstrating behavior that threatens others and / or them.

## **IV. MAIN RESPONSE STEPS**

- ***-STABILIZE THE CRISIS SITUATION***
- ***-CALL 911 – STAY ON THE PHONE***
- ***-TURN CRISIS SITUATION OVER TO***  
***§ THE POLICE***

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# V. “ACTION PLAN” GUIDELINES FOR ALL EMPLOYEES

1. Identify and report the incident **immediately** to the building principal. If principal not available, report to the assistant principal or person in charge.
  
2. Reporting person and principal should communicate details of incident:
  - a. Nature of situation
  
  - b. Specific location
  
  - c. Type of weapon: if suspected or known
  
  - d. Description of individual(s) names, if known
  
  - e. Hostage(s) - number and name(s), if known
  
  - f. Type of demands being made, if known
  
  - g. Nature of injuries, if known
  
3. Principal/Administrator should call or direct a secretary/employee to call Sheffield Village Police (949-6155) or Sheffield Lake Police 949-7131)

depending on the location of building or place of incident. Sheffield Village Police – Brookside High, Sheffield Middle, Barr Elementary Sheffield Lake Police – Knollwood, Forestlawn, Tennyson (Elementary)

- a. **Dial 911:** if phone line is not available, then use public pay phone **(911)** or dedicated phone, or computer modem, if unavailable, try use of computer such as ICQ, E-MAIL to other personnel.
  - b. Give personal name, name of school and report the details of incident. **Stay on the phone lines.**
  - c. Give specific direction to where police are to report. Report to principal or assistant principal at main office unless situation dictates otherwise.
4. Principal / assistant principal should make decisions to: 1) maintain safety of students and employees: and 2) stabilize the situation, if possible, until police arrive.
- a. Turn off bell system to avoid a class exchange. (Secretary)
  - b. Make “RED ALERT” PA announcement for students and staff to remain in the classroom and shut / lock door until further notice. Indicate NO passes are to be used and all students in the hall should enter the nearest classroom and remain there, until announcing a “**RED ALERT**” all clear. There is absolutely to be **NO** use of the phones. Disclose non-life threatening information after consultation with police. (Administrator or Secretary)
  - c. Alert building security (if any), and employ security **under the direction of a district school administrator** until police arrive on the scene. (Administrator or Designee)

- d. Locate custodian (if possible) and have him / her report to main office. (Secretary / Designee)
  - e. Notify building Main Office / Secretary and/or central office to hold all incoming calls and to leave all lines available for police and emergency communication. (Secretary)
5. Principal / assistant principal should meet the first arriving police officer on the scene.
- a. Identify self to police.
  - b. Relate information **accurately** and **factually**. Update situation since phoning police.
  - c. Take direction from police officers. **The police are now in charge of handling the crisis.**
  - d. Principal / assistant principal should supervise school personnel and assist police.
  - e. Custodian and secretary should:
    - i. Establish a central command office.
    - ii. Prepare to answer incoming phone calls when authorized by police.
    - iii. Provide floor plan or blueprint of building (attach).

iv. Carry out other duties as directed by police, principal, or designee.

f. Nurse (if available), in cooperation with paramedic support should:

i. Respond to any injured student(s) or personnel.

ii. Establish a medical headquarters area.

iii. Maintain a record of injured and have access to emergency forms.

iv. Nurse (if on duty) should either remain at building or report to hospital emergency room based on nature of event and directions of police. Contact the nurse if not on site at time of crisis

g. Notify superintendent of schools and apprise of the situation. (Principal or Designee).

h. Notify Director of Transportation if buses will be needed to evacuate students from school grounds. The police if possible should make this decision. (Principal or Designee).

6. Principal / assistant principal will cooperate with the police to 1) isolate areas of building / grounds and 2) evacuate the classrooms / building if determined safe and appropriate by police **except** in case of bomb threat / explosion which may require the immediate evacuation of the building. Otherwise:

a. Police will secure identified evacuation areas and direct the evacuation in incidents involving hostages or potential evolving threats to students / employees.

- b. Evacuated students will be directed to a designated area, which, if possible, will be secured by police.
  - c. Weather (temperature and wind conditions) should be assessed, particularly with sub-zero temperatures or in case of cross winds in the event of an environmental or chemical disaster.
  - d. Teachers must maintain a record of evacuated students. This is important to identify students accurately and respond to injuries.
7. Principal / assistant principal, with direction and support of central office administration and psychological services, will respond to the following:
- a. Parent calls and inquires.
  - b. Procedure for release of students to parent / guardian.
  - c. Expectations of media.
  - d. Establish rumor control.
  - e. Attend to the emotional needs of students and employees and activate crisis intervention team.
  - f. Debriefing with police, fire, medical, and social service agencies.

g. Plan next day's school schedule.

h. Prepare news releases and other communications.

**IMPORTANT:** If an administrator or "designated administrator" is not available at a time of crisis, the individual witnessing or knowledgeable about the sudden and dangerous / violent situation should initiate a response by calling 911.

There is no guaranteed right way to handle all violent or dangerous situations. At best, sometimes all that can be done is to minimize the number and severity of injuries and protect those not directly involved. It is impossible to develop a definitive plan which will meet the demands of every dangerous / violent situation.

## **VI. "PREVENTION PLAN" GUIDELINES FOR ALL EMPLOYEES**

1. Provide **security / safety education** and promote a "**sense of community**" as two key common strategies in the school **security / prevention** program.
  - a. Review crisis "Action Plan" periodically with staff and students. Include plan highlights in faculty and student handbooks.
  - b. Emphasize and promote that "**Security and Safety is Everyone's Business Everyday.**"

- c. Integrate safety and security measures into the everyday operation of the school.
  - d. Encourage students and staff to take responsibility for their own safety and security of the school. Everyone should be aware of the environment and their surroundings.
  - e. Promote the responsibility to immediately report any suspicious people, events or incidents in a school building and / or on school grounds.
  - f. Apply procedures for identification of troubled youth and possible intervention with identified students.
2. Monitor **access, control, and visibility** of the building and grounds. Blend security requirements with the concept of making the school “Inviting.” Consider the following:
- a. Lock, restrict, or monitor perimeter exterior door entrances to the building. Redirect visitors to a main / front entrance(s) with signs and appealing access pathways. Main entrances usually provide the most natural environment for awareness and surveillance.
  - b. Post “Report to Office” signs that are easily visible on exterior entrances and on the inside of the building. Have signs directing visitors to main office(s).
  - c. Greet visitors as soon as possible when entering the building. Provide a designated sign in area(s) for visitors and / or a name tag system.

- d. Limit building access with a key control management system by restricting possession of unnecessary keys.
  
- e. Provide direct two-way visibility, if at all possible, to building grounds and within the building itself. Avoid covering glass areas that provide area / door two-way visibility in door and other areas.
  
- f. Designate school ground parking and pick-up areas for visitors. Staff cars should be parked in a defined area(s) and window I.D. utilized (if feasible). Students parking should be managed by a car registration and car permit program.
  
- g. Implement a plan for the identification and intervention of troubled youth.

3. Provide ongoing **supervision** of the building and grounds.

- a. Expect the teaching staff to be visible at their classroom door for hallway supervision on a regular basis.
  
- b. Assign staff to monitor key areas of the building.
  
- c. Employ periodic hall patrol(s) to check for the accountability of students not in an assigned class.
  
- d. Perform school walkabouts with a focus on safety and security.

- e. Supply security personnel at extracurricular events when high-count participation is anticipated particularly, public events.
- f. Consider use of parent volunteers and / or students at main entrance(s) as greeters to provide a school welcome and directions.
- g. Expect custodial staff to perform periodic check of perimeter exterior door entrances and monitor the school grounds on a regular basis.

4. Prepare for implementing the crisis “action plan.”

- a. Keep abreast of changes in the school operations and the physical plan that would enhance effectively carrying out the “action plan.”
- b. Maintain periodic dialogue with Sheffield Village Police Department on procedures, changes, and strategies for both security, prevention and crisis action.
- c. Discuss rationale and reason(s) for the main components of the prevention and “action plan.” Point out: “What is the safest usually is not convenient.”
- d. Communicate to the parents the general concepts and procedures of the security prevention and action plan.
- e. Make staff aware of immediate access and methods of communication to the administration and / or security in a potentially, sudden and / or dangerous violent situation.

f. Practice the “ACTION PLAN”.

# VII. CRISIS RESPONSE Code: “RED ALERT

On notification of a “RED ALERT” all students, staff, and other persons in the building should immediately take the following action with urgency:

## EMPTY HALLS AND NON-SUPERVISED AREAS

- All students enter and/or remain in the nearest classroom or supervised area with a school employee.
- Shut and lock doors, if possible.

## REMAIN IN CLASSROOM / SUPERVISED ROOM

- All students are under the supervision of the teacher / school employee. (Record attendance of all students present)
- Quiet status in effect as in fire / tornado drills.
- Await further information.

EXIT ONLY ON “ALL CLEAR”

- Employee / Teacher will be notified of “all clear” via PA announcement or personal contact by school official and / or law enforcement agent.

# VIII. “ACTION PLAN” GUIDELINES FOR PHYSICAL VIOLENCE / FIGHTING

1. Immediately visualize the altercation to determine if: a) weapon is involved  
b) possible risk (safety) to others.
  
2. Level I: (Two Combatants, Verbal Attempt to Resolve). Direct students verbally to STOP.
  - a. Use student(s) names.
  
  - b. Use authoritative voice.
  
  - c. Move forward towards combative repeating names and directive to “stop fighting”, including the identification of opposite locations to where you want combative to move. (Example: John, Rich - STOP FIGHTING! John backs off to the lockers. Rich go to drinking fountain).
  
  - d. Continue to repeat directives, tactfully attempting to position self (See Safeguards for All Employees) between the combatives.
  
  - e. Direct others (if present) to form barriers between combatives and remove combatives to a separate area/location.

- f. Send student or secure administration as quickly and as early as possible in the witnessing of the physical violence/fighting act. Turn situation over to administrator(s) once they are on the scene of the incident.
  
- g. Obtain names of witnesses of the altercation and secure any information that led to the physical violence/fighting.
  
- h. Assess injury and determine the need for first aid and/or emergency rescue services.

3. Level II: (Two Combatives Refuse to Separate or Multiple Combatives).

- a. Direct student(s) to verbally stop using combatants name(s), (if known), in a authoritative voice, and directive to move to opposite locations with an attempt to physically intervene by forming a separating barrier with others if they are available, (See Safeguards For All Employees).
  
- b. Secure additional assistance if not available on the scene and make attempt to physically separate all combatives from each other simultaneously to prevent an attack on a removed combative that is being physically restrained.
  
- c. Remove separated combative being restrained quickly from the scene of the altercation and protect combatants from re-instigating the conflict.
  
  
- d. Follow standard operating procedures in Level I:

- i. Secure administration if not on the scene.
- ii. Assess injury and need for First Aid.
- iii. Secure names of witnesses.
- iv. Dial 911 for extreme violence and/or serious injury.

e. Assess for the need of "CODE RED" or "CODE BLUE".

#### 4. Level III: Extreme\_Violence, Severe Injury/ Blood, and Weapon.

- a. Direct combatants to stop following previous procedure, (name, and voice, opposite locations).
- b. Weapon present? If yes, clear area and administration takes charge until the police arrive, "CODE RED" dials 911 and follows "ACTION PLAN GUIDELINES" and directions of administrator and/or law enforcement.
- c. NO weapon, but severe injury and significant blood loss of blood? Clear area (administration takes charge until police arrive). "CODE RED", dial 911, follow "ACTION PLAN GUIDELINES" and directions of administrators and/or law enforcement.
- d. NO weapon, but injury? Attempt to intervene, separate and attend to injuries until first aid/emergency takes over situation. Assess for need of "CODE RED" or "CODE BLUE". Apply procedure for blood and air borne pathogens in all situations of injury.

## 5. SAFEGUARDS ALL EMPLOYEES

- a. Assess situation for safety risk(s) to self and others.
- b. Determine if any weapons are involved
- c. Protect self/others from blood and other air borne pathogens.
- d. Do not exceed intervention beyond that of a reasonably prudent person.
- e. Take reasonable and prudent measures to protect self from physical harm.
- f. Fulfill duties and responsibilities of all EMERGENCY SITUATIONS, DRILLS, "CODES" and/or Crisis Situation.
- g. Cooperate to allow school administrators and/or law enforcement to investigate, carry out responsibilities and insure that rights/due processes are followed.
- h. Follow directions of administrators and/or law enforcement.

## 6. ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

- a. Follow "Safeguards for All Employees".

- b. Stabilize and de-escalate situation, if possible, waiting for law enforcement to take over in serious situations.
  
- c. Avoid excessive force, if at all possible, particularly the use of police like instruments, such as irritant spray, immobilizing stun guns and martial art “weapons”, etc.
  
- d. Notify Superintendent ASAP.
  
- e. Investigate and apply school policies, O.R.C. and Federal statues.
  
- f. Take ages - appropriate action in managing violent/fight situations/altercations.
  
- g. Inform staff and others in Level II and Level III situations in a timely and appropriate “need to know” manner.
  
- h. Maintain a normal school day or modification if necessary.

# IX. CRISIS RESPONSE CODE: “BLUE ALERT

Upon notification of a “BLUE ALERT”, designated staff members (employees) are to immediately report to a designated area/location to stabilize an existing situation or intervene in a potentially dangerous/random or violent crisis situation.

The “BLUE ALERT” will be activated by the designation (usually by an announcement over the PA) using the fictitious name of a person and location, example: “Will Mr.           (deceased)          , please report to room 106.

## DESIGNATED EMPLOYEES REPORT IMMEDIATELY TO LOCATION

Provide passive support by presence and proximity to administrator handling the potentially dangerous/random situation.  
Provide intervention on the direction of the administrator to stabilize a situation, employing the “Safeguard Guidelines for All Employees”.

## REMAIN IN THE DESIGNATED AREA

Assist administrator in fulfilling duties.  
Keep area clear from onlookers/spectators.

## TERMINATION OF EVENT/SITUATION

Return to assigned duty/responsibility.

Communicate in manner to reassure safety status and to maintain rumor control.