Safe Schools

A joint publication of the Colorado School Safety Resource Center and the CU-Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence
Colorado Department of Public Safety and the University of Colorado-Boulder

Volume 1, Issue 2 November/December 2008

New Director is Hired for Colorado School Safety Resource Center

Linda Kanan has been named as the director of the Colorado School Safety Resource Center. Prior to joining CSSRC, Dr. Kanan served as the district intervention coordinator of the Safe Schools Design Team in the Cherry Creek School District.

She has worked for the past 21 years as a school psychologist in Denver area schools, focusing on high-risk behavior prevention and intervention. She has taught graduate-level courses in crisis prevention and intervention and trained school districts statewide in crisis prevention, team development and response, suicide intervention, and threat assessment.

Working with Dr. Kanan is a multi-disciplinary advisory board consisting of educators, health and mental health professionals, representatives from the legal community, parents' organizations, and safety and security specialists.

The Center will coordinate a collaborative effort to assist Colorado schools in preventing, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies and crisis situations. It will provide access to and support for best practices resources and training for development of safe and positive school environments. Please check the Web site at http://cdpsweb.state.co.us/cssrc for current information about the Center. ❖

Awareness Helps Protect Students In Cyberspace

Because the majority of young people often interact with one another online and with cell phones, it is no surprise that bullying has followed the crowd into cyberspace. Using electronic means such as instant messages and postings to Web sites to harass, threaten, or embarrass another person is known as cyber bullying.

Several research projects from the past five years indicate that approximately 20% of youths have been the target of cyber bullies at least once. Some studies also indicate that girls are more involved in cyber bullying than boys (both as victim and aggressor).

Unlike face-to-face bullying, where an imbalance of power is commonly thought to be a factor, cyber bullying can occur between friends, peers who have equal social standing, or between complete strangers.

Another unique aspect of cyber bullying is that it can be done anonymously and at any time, from any place. This anonymity and freedom can entice some people to act as if there are no consequences for their behavior, freeing some to show off or say things they would never say in person. It can also lead to greater distress for victims who may have no idea who is targeting them or be tricked into thinking the bully is someone else. Either scenario can make it more difficult to identify the bully.

Cyber bullying, like many disrespectful and hurtful behaviors, is often done outside the watchful eyes of adults. But educators and parents can take certain steps to promote safe and positive online behavior.

Some tips include:

- Remind students to be careful with personal information they post online.
- Tell students not to respond to harassing messages, but do keep a record by saving or printing the message.
- Report incidents to Web site moderators, and block the offender if possible.
- Keep computers in common areas. Monitor time spent online and talk to students if they appear distressed from a text message or being online.
- Talk openly about the pitfalls of cyber bullying. Some youths don't want to tell parents or teachers for fear of losing privileges.
- Explore the social networking and blog sites students visit to better understand how they are used and what students are posting online.
- Make sure everyone is familiar with all school policies regarding cyber bullying.
- School policies should address:
  - the appropriate use of technology;
  - safety education;
  - proper monitoring of school resources;
  - provide an opportunity to report problems and get help.
- Contact the police if messages include child pornography, threats of violence, stalking behavior, or extortion.

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Safe Schools is produced by the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado-Boulder in collaboration with the Colorado School Safety Resource Center.

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NIMS Compliance Timelines Due July 9, 2009

By July 9, 2009, all school districts and the Charter School Institute must establish a timeline for attaining NIMS compliance. NIMS is the National Incident Management System and is used when responding to emergencies. A position paper was developed by key Colorado education and safety agencies to highlight the requirements of Senate Bill 08-181 and how to meet them.

Visit http://cdpsweb.state.co.us/nims.html to view the position paper and links to related resources.

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Save the Date: April 15, 2009

Colorado Springs, CO

You are invited to attend a one-day training on school violence prevention sponsored by SCSS and the CSSRC.

Topics will include:

- School Violence Trends
- Mental Health Resources
- Safe Schools Planning
- Evidence-based Programs
- Information Sharing
- School Liability
- Crisis Response
- Threat Assessments

plus others...

Schedule and registration details will be announced in early 2009.
There is no charge to attend, but registration is required.
Seating is limited to 150 participants.

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Computers and cell phones are staple items in most teens' lives, so many of them are much more savvy online than their parents or teachers.

For instance, a new language of acronyms has evolved to make texting and instant messaging easier. It is a safe bet that most teens know more of this language than the average adult does.

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, working with the Ad Council, has an awareness campaign called Help Delete Online Predators that deciphers many of these acronyms used online. A few examples include:

P911	my parents are coming
PA	parent alert
POS	parent over shoulder
PIR	parent in room
TAW	teachers are watching
NP	nosy parents

Becoming familiar with this language is another way that educators and parents can help children remain safe while in cyberspace. Respecting teens' privacy is a consideration, but becoming aware and active in their online activities is smart.

The integration of information technology into student life presents a new avenue for schools to emphasize that a climate of respect does not tolerate bullying or harassment of any sort, online or in person. Emphasizing respect, positive behavior, and problem solving skills can help students navigate the social turmoil so prevalent in the teen years. ❖

Internet Safety Resources:

www.missingkids.com
www.netsmartz.org
www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov
www.ncpc.org
www.cyberbullyhelp.com
www.isafe.org

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