



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY-  
INVESTIGATION REPORT (DPS-302-E) (REVISED 2/3/06)**

Report #: 1200704559 - 00258008

Report Type: Initial Report:  Prosecutors Report:  Supplement:  Re-open:  Assist:  Closing:

Attachments: Statements:  Teletype:  Photos:  Sketchmap:  Evidence:  Other:

CFS NO 1200704559	INCIDENT DATE 12/14/2012	TIME 09:41	INCIDENT DATE 12/14/2012	TIME	PRIMARY OFFICER JEWISS, DANIEL E.	BADGE NO 0034	INVESTIGATING OFFICER ROY, ANDRE	BADGE NO 0518
INCIDENT ADDRESS 00012 Dickenson Dr Newtown 06482					APARTMENT NO	TOWN CD	TYPE OF EXCEPTIONAL CLEARANCE Not Applicable	CASE STATUS Active

Date and Time of Investigation:

Friday, December 14th, 2012 at approximately 0930 hours.

Summary of Incident:

On the above mentioned date and time members of the Western District Major Crime Squad responded to the scene of an active shooter within the Sandy Hook Elementary School located at 12 Dickerson Drive Newtown, CT.

Action Taken:

As a standard procedural function in this type of investigation several documents were seized from the school. Among the documents were the school's Emergency Response Plans. (See attached.)

CASE UNDER INVESTIGATION

THE UNDERSIGNED, AN INVESTIGATOR HAVING BEEN DULY SWORN DEPOSES AND SAYS THAT: I AM THE WRITER OF THE ATTACHED POLICE REPORT PERTAINING TO THIS INCIDENT NUMBER. THAT THE INFORMATION CONTAINED THEREIN WAS SECURED AS A RESULT OF (1) MY PERSONAL OBSERVATION AND KNOWLEDGE; OR (2) INFORMATION RELAYED TO ME BY OTHER MEMBERS OF MY POLICE DEPARTMENT OR OF ANOTHER POLICE DEPARTMENT; OR (3) INFORMATION SECURED BY MYSELF OR ANOTHER MEMBER OF A POLICE DEPARTMENT FROM THE PERSON OR PERSONS NAMED OR IDENTIFIED THEREIN, AS INDICATED IN THE ATTACHED REPORT. THAT THE REPORT IS AN ACCURATE STATEMENT OF THE INFORMATION SO RECEIVED BY ME.				
<b>JAN 04 2013</b>				
INVESTIGATOR SIGNATURE: <b>/TFC ANDRE ROY/</b>	INVESTIGATOR I.D.#: 0518	REPORT DATE: 12/31/2012 10:00 am 01400	SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE <b>/SGT MARK DAVISON/</b>	SUPERVISOR I.D.#: 0204

# EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Executive Secretary

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## Sandy Hook Elementary School

12 Dickinson Drive

Sandy Hook, CT 06482

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### Emergency Resource Numbers

Unknown Persons/Intruders / Building Disruptions

Evacuation Sites and Transportation

Weather Related Emergencies

Facility Emergencies

Bomb Threats

Communicable Disease / Suicide Prevention

Issues of Death and Dying / D.N.R. Orders

All Hazards Approach

Media Crisis Communication Plan

Site Plans



# PURPOSE STATEMENT

A goal of the Newtown Board of Education is creating a positive school environment where learning can take place in a safe and secure climate. In order to ensure that the school environment is safe for all students, the Newtown Public Schools have the capacity to deal with a crisis and emergencies when they occur. It is important that every staff person have an understanding of district and school plans regarding emergencies, and understands their responsibilities. Building personnel who know the students, parents and school community are best able to provide direction and support in times of a crisis. School-based teams can react quickly, respond in a personal and individualized manner, and continue monitoring the after effects of a crisis. This guide is intended to provide both essential information and instructions to enable a school to respond appropriately in case of an emergency and to provide information on prevention, intervention, and post-crisis planning.

• Newtown Police and Emergency Service .....	911
• Superintendent of Schools .....	14
• Principal .....	14
• Dir. of Security .....	14 or Pager 14
• Sandy Hook Main Offices .....	14
• Buildings & Grounds .....	14
• Director of Business .....	14
• School Nurse .....	14
• School Psychologist .....	14
• Head Custodian .....	14
• Cafeteria .....	14

CRISIS CODES	
Shelter in Place	14
Evacuation	14
INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM	
14	

## Emergency Resource Numbers

Unknown Persons/Intruders / Building Disruptions

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Suicide Prevention



## UNKNOWN PERSON/INTRUDERS

Staff, faculty and students should be observant at all times. Be diligent in reporting any and all unknown persons entering the school property, either in the parking lots or inside the facility.

1. Keep a cautious distance from the person while you introduce yourself and offer the person help to establish a valid or a suspicious response.
2. Go to the nearest phone [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED] who will notify [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED] of the sighting, if the person is suspicious.

## BUILDING DISRUPTIONS

### RESPONDING TO A DISRUPTION ACCORDING TO THE LEVEL OF SERIOUSNESS AND INTENSITY.

**LEVEL 1.** When a disruption is confined to one area and there is no threat to students or staff, (e.g., intruder or verbally abusive individual):

1. Go to [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED] who will then notify [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED]
2. Indicate [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED] as the kind of response needed and identify the exact location.
3. Containment and removal with minimum interruption of the educational processes should be the overall practice.

**LEVEL 2.** When disruptive forces pose a direct threat to members of the school community (e.g., threatening, suspicious or angry intruders, gang activity or possibility of weapon possession):

1. Go to [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED] who will notify [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED] of the sighting.
2. Indicate [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED] as the kind of response needed and identify the exact location.
3. Institute classroom "lockdown" [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED]
4. [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED] to notify Incident Management Team and police if necessary. [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED]

Unknown Persons/Intruders / Building Disruptions

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## SUGGESTED EVACUATION SITES AND TRANSPORTATION

### OUTDOOR EVACUATION - TEMPORARY HOLDING AREA AND EARLY DISMISSAL

1. Outdoor evacuation - temporary holding area and early dismissal. Primary holding areas are [REDACTED] 14 ;
2. Secondary holding area will be [REDACTED] 14 . A member of the Incident Management Team will secure that road to ensure safety of students from traffic. Classroom teachers and rest of Incident Management Team (IMT) will escort classes to designated area. Should it become necessary to transport students to Relocation Site (see below), students will be escorted to [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED]

### INDOOR - SHELTER IN PLACE

1. In certain emergency situations [REDACTED] 14 may serve as areas of refuge. These areas are large enough to accommodate all of the students and staff. They also have double exits, close proximity to bathroom facilities and a means of communication.

## Relocation Sites

[REDACTED] 14 - In the event Sandy Hook School cannot be reentered, students will be transported to [REDACTED] 14 for ultimate delivery home. Buses will pick up children at [REDACTED] 14

**Evacuation Sites and Transportation**

**Weather Related Emergencies**

**Facility Emergencies**

# WEATHER RELATED EMERGENCIES

## EARTHQUAKE

Because earthquakes can strike without warning, the immediate need is to protect lives by taking the best available cover. All other actions must wait until the tremors subside.

1. **Shelter In Place/Duck and Cover.** Advise staff and students (code for shelter in place) to take shelter under desks, tables or furniture. Hold onto the legs of the furniture and keep away from windows, electrical equipment and cabinets. Drop to your knees, make body as small as possible, and bury face in your arms. If outdoors, stay clear of buildings, trees and power lines. Stay outdoors. Lie face down and wait for tremors to subside.
2. Determine a temporary command post and notify the Incident Management Team. Assess the situation.
3. Identify injured persons. If necessary call 911 for emergency services.
4. Identify danger zones and set up inner and outer perimeters to control access and limit risk.
5. Consider **selective evacuation** while continuing to **shelter in place**. Inspect buildings before moving.
6. Shut off ventilation system.
7. Identify and request needed resources.

## TORNADO / HURRICANE / SEVERE THUNDERSTORM

Tornadoes, hurricanes and severe thunderstorms may occur in this area. Information regarding tornadoes will be broadcast on the National Weather Station and usually provides 12-24 hours of advanced warning. This does not generally constitute an in-school emergency. The Superintendent will relay information to all the principals. However, should a situation arise where you are caught in session without notice, do the following:

1. Continue normal operations and notify the Incident Management Team.
2. Open a command post and remain available to give orders and receive information.
3. Make and maintain communications with the Superintendent of Schools.
4. Try to determine the level of threat and amount of time left to react.
5. Choose either **early dismissal** if sufficient time remains, or, if not, **Shelter in Place**.
6. Make radio announcements and notify parents in a timely fashion.
7. If necessary, advise the population of **High Wind Emergency** practices. Take shelter in hallways at pre-designated locations using Duck and Cover protocol. Keep away from windows, electrical equipment and cabinets. Drop to your knees, make body as small as possible, and bury face in arms.



## FACILITY EMERGENCIES

### POWER FAILURE

Sandy Hook School is equipped with an emergency power system. The school is self-supporting and allows normal operation. However, if this system should fail:

1. Children will be kept in their rooms monitored by appropriate staff until it is determined whether or not an early dismissal is warranted.
2. The principal and all members of the Incident Management Team will immediately report to the Main Office. The room fits the criteria for a command post and is naturally lit with a southern exposure.
3. Shelter in place. The Incident Management Team should verbally inform staff and students to remain where they are until further notice.
4. Notify and consult with Building Grounds Director [REDACTED] 14  
cell phone [REDACTED] 14, pager [REDACTED] 14
5. Notify and consult with the Superintendent's office [REDACTED] 14
6. Consider moving students in darkness, if necessary, to a naturally lit area in the building.
7. Determine whether early dismissal or a move to an alternate site is warranted.
8. Notify Director of Transportation [REDACTED] 14

## **FIRE / GAS LEAK**

1. **Activate the fire alarm and evacuate facility. Do not use the elevators.**  
No bells, switches, or electronic devices, etc. may be used.  
Portable radios and cell phone communication are safe.
2. Teachers, via directions posted in every classroom, "follow" students out of classroom to assure no one is left behind. Staff and students must be at least 75-100 feet away from the structure and clear of road ways.
3. Incident Management Team is to report to their designated posts with portable radios while custodians shall check buildings for person then exit.
4. Notify Building Grounds Director [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED] Cell phone [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED] pager [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED]  
He will notify the Gas Company and the Superintendent's office at [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED].
5. Maintenance personnel should respond as rapidly as possible to investigate the problem area.
6. If the principal determines that the emergency will be of considerable duration, or if remaining at the school site presents a hazard, directions will be given for moving to an alternate site or dismissal.
7. All emergency early dismissals will be announced on the radio and parents will be contacted if at all possible.

## **Facility Emergencies**

### **Bomb Threats**



## BOMB THREATS

Keep the caller on the line as long as possible. Write the exact wording of the threat. Ask caller to repeat the message. Pay particular attention to background noises, such as motors running, music playing, and any other noise which may give a clue as to the location of the caller. Listen closely to the voice (male, female), voice quality (calm, excited), accents, and speech impediments.

### Questions to ask the caller:

- What is your name? \_\_\_\_\_
- When is the bomb going to explode? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where is the bomb right now? \_\_\_\_\_
- What does it look like? \_\_\_\_\_
- What will cause it to explode? \_\_\_\_\_
- Did you place the bomb? \_\_\_\_\_
- Why do you want to hurt innocent people? \_\_\_\_\_
- Number receiving the call: \_\_\_\_\_ Staff Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*Immediately after the caller hangs up, report the information to the principal of the school.*

### ACTION GUIDE

1. **Establish communication and assess situation.** Principal attempts to determine, from available information (type of call, age of caller, nature of message, etc.), whether the threat is merely a hoax or a bonafide threat. In either case be prepared and immediately notify:

- Incident Management Team 14
- Local Police/Emergency Services (911).
- Superintendent of Schools 14
- State Police Bomb Squad. 14

As soon as possible, choose one of following options:

- A. Continue program and investigate the threat.
  - B. Evacuate immediately and search after evacuation. 14 means evacuate facility in the normal timely fashion and wait for outside resources to arrive.
  - C. Search and evacuate, if warranted. 14 means shelter in place and stay put.
2. **Identify the Danger Zone (with option C.)** The principal should utilize the staff to assist in the search, each staff member having a pre-designated area. 14
- \_\_\_\_\_ An evacuation can be accomplished expeditiously while at the same time avoiding the potential danger areas. If a suspicious item is found, leave it alone and move to the next step. Open all doors and windows if possible.

Evacuation options:

- A. Standard fire drill method of evacuation.
- B. Extended distance evacuation to 14
- C. Inclement weather evacuation to 14



3. **Set Inner Perimeter.** [REDACTED] 14  
[REDACTED]
  4. **Set Outer Perimeter.** [REDACTED] 14  
[REDACTED]
  5. **Open a Command Post.** You should open a command post (to be determined) as soon as possible. It should be [REDACTED] 14  
[REDACTED]
  6. **Activate Staging Areas.** Point out where resources could or should report before they are deployed.
  7. **Identify and Request Needed Resources.** As early as possible, try to assess what resources might be needed and request that they be made available. Be proactive and creative when ordering resources. Know what the district can provide, but also know what might be available through other nearby sources. Sound judgement dictates locating equipment and supplies already in the area that can be invaluable. Regardless of where the resources come from, direct them to the staging areas so they can be called upon when needed.
- As soon as possible, choose one of the following:
- A. Return to normal operation. Decision made concurrently by a building principal/police.
  - B. Early dismissal. Decision to be made by the superintendent.

## Bomb Threats

Communicable Disease

Suicide Prevention

Issues of Death and Dying

D.N.R. Orders

All Hazards Approach



## COMMUNICABLE DISEASE REPORT

If a confirmed case of communicable disease has been reported that could affect the student population or staff, the Coordinator of Health Services, in collaboration with the School Medical Advisor, the Director of Health, and the Superintendent of Schools will take the necessary precautions to contain and/or alleviate any potential health risk.

### CONTACTS

Nursing Supervisor: [REDACTED] 14

Medical Advisor: (unlisted)

Director of Health: [REDACTED] 14

Superintendent of Schools: [REDACTED] 14

- Any staff member who has knowledge of a potential health risk due to a contagion to the student population or staff should report this to the school nurse immediately.
- The school nurse will take the necessary steps to confirm or deny the possible contagion by contacting the parents and advising them of the need to seek medical consultation.
- The nurse, after consulting with the school medical advisor, will exclude the student from school.
- The student will continue to be excluded until such time as the medical care provider has confirmed, in writing, that it is safe for the student to return to school.
- If there has been a potential exposure to other persons in the school, the Coordinator of Health Services, School Medical Advisor and Director of Health will collaborate on what expedient and effective procedures should be implemented.
- The private physician should notify state and local health departments of all reportable cases after consulting with the school medical advisor.
- Any release of information to the media will be made through the Office of the Superintendent.
- Confidentiality will be maintained.



## YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION

The Newtown Public Schools believe that any school employee who may have knowledge of a student who could potentially commit suicide must take the proper steps, as specified in the Board Policy and Regulations, which include notifying the student's parents or guardians/surrogates and taking the appropriate steps to ensure the student's safety.

### SOME WARNING SIGNS OR RISK FACTORS

- expression of suicidal thoughts
- preoccupation with death
- abrupt changes in personality such as crying, irritability, recklessness, promiscuity, atypical sleeping or eating patterns, apathy, declining grades
- withdrawal from friends
- giving away possessions
- excessive grieving from a recent loss (e.g., death in the family or the breaking up of a relationship), previous history of suicide or suicidal gestures, feeling of worthlessness
- abuse of alcohol, or other drugs
- access to weapons, especially guns

These factors become even more significant if a parent, friend, or sibling has committed suicide.

### GUIDELINES FOR REACTING TO POTENTIAL SUICIDE

If a student confides in you that he/she is contemplating suicide do not keep it a secret. Try to transfer the child's trust in you to a school specialist, (i.e., psychologist, social worker or crisis counselor) who will work with the student and involve a responsible parent or guardian in arranging for treatment outside school.

If school is not in session and there is no responsible parent or guardian/surrogate, the suicidal person needs to get to Danbury Hospital's Crisis Intervention Center via the emergency room, which is open 24 hours every day (phone 797-7899).

**Communicable Disease**

**Suicide Prevention**

**Issues of Death and Dying**

**D.N.R. Orders**

**All Hazards Approach**

**Media Crisis Communication Plan**



# ISSUES OF DEATH AND DYING AND STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

## PRINCIPAL SHOULD

1. Verify the death or situational information with family.
2. Notify other appropriate personnel who may need to check on siblings.  
Call Superintendent with known information so he can be prepared for the media.
3. Call faculty meeting and alert all staff.
4. Call crisis team/caring committee coordinator to identify and assist vulnerable staff and students. Plan to offer students and staff time out, counseling, or just someone with whom to talk.
5. Work with team/committee to chair faculty/staff meeting to announce incident.
6. Draft memo for students to be read by teachers.
7. Draft a letter to parents.
8. Assist with contacting helping agencies and individuals.
9. Assist with identifying vulnerable staff and students.
10. Hold a brief end-of-day faculty meeting.
11. Arrange to return student or staff belongings in a personalized and caring manner.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Attempt to de-mystify the incident.
- Be honest.
- Respond to any questions asked about the incident.
- Avoid supplying graphic details.
- Remember that children often lack the sophistication to discuss death and tragedy in a sensitive way.
- Model honest expression of feelings on your own part.
- Be attentive to the non-verbal communication.
- A decrease in activity levels may indicate a strong sense of sadness or a sense of being overwhelmed.
- An increase in energy or excitability may indicate the youth's subconscious attempts to distract themselves from the reality of the events (denial).

## CONCEPTS OF THE DYING PROCESS

There are four major aspects of death that children struggle to comprehend as they grow:

- Death is irreversible (permanent and final).
- Death is universal - all life will ultimately succumb to death.
- Death ends physical sensations and functioning.
- Death has specific causes, such as injury or illness.

Grieving is age-dependent. The stage of psychological development that a child has reached will affect his/her grieving.

- Children under three years old do not distinguish between death and absence.
- Children 3-5 years old begin to understand death as something that happens to others.  
This group often personifies death as a person or thing. This age group still believes that death can be avoided or escaped.



### 3. Set Inner Perimeter

14

### 4. Set Outer Perimeter

14

### 5. Open a Command Post

A command post should be opened as soon as possible. It should be [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED]. A number of factors should be considered when selecting a site for the command post: good communications capabilities, good lighting and ventilation with adequate resources, access to response personnel on site as well as district-level managers in the district office. At the same time, they must have access to the command post. The command post should have adequate security. It should not be subjected to unwarranted interruptions by people not involved in the response such as media, parents and onlookers. It is not important to have a view of the danger zone.

It is a good idea that [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED] the secondary command post will likely be a viable alternative. Always be prepared to consider a third site [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED]. Large facilities such as the high school and middle school might actually have three predetermined command posts. Just because there are predetermined sites does not mean administrators are locked into using them.

### 6. Activate Staging Areas

Staging areas are where all emergency resources should be sent before they are deployed. Without

*(Continued on following page)*



## THE ALL HAZARDS APPROACH (continued)

these areas, resources tend to bunch up and clog the scene making an effective response almost impossible. There can be more than one staging area for each event. The number of areas activated will be determined by the type of incident, the number of resources being sent, and the geographic and logistical aspects of getting those resources to the site. When considering where to locate a staging area, several factors should be considered:

- **Size of Area** - A staging area must be large enough to accommodate many vehicles and personnel on a standby basis, such as fire trucks, heavy equipment, police, and the Life Star Helicopter.
- **Good Access** - Resources must be able to get to the staging area. Make it as easy as possible to stage resources so they can be called up as soon as they are needed. The location should allow for a quick and effective deployment. As a rule, a resource should be capable of operation within three to five minutes after being called up.
- **Security** - The staging area should be located in a spot that has little chance of becoming threatened by the event. If the area is too close to the source, it could become part of the danger zone. In a hazardous materials incident, the staging area should not be located down wind of the source.
- **A Staging Area** is often a good site for a media information center. Television reporters will want to use dramatic visuals to report a major event. Since many resources will be in the staging area, live reports can be fed using lighting from emergency vehicles.

### 7. Identify and Request Needed Resources

As early as possible, try to assess what resources might be needed and request that they be made available. Be proactive and creative when ordering resources. Know what the district can provide, but also know what might be available through other nearby sources.



- Children 5-9 begin to understand death as a personal event. Death is usually associated with injury and mutilation. Children 10 years and older generally understand death as an ultimate outcome in life.
- Adolescents often become "fixated" with death as they begin to realize that their goals will take time to achieve and death could potentially interfere with these.

### POSSIBLE REACTIONS TO DEATH AND LOSS

Shock, Depression, Somatic Symptoms, Fear, Denial, Curiosity, Anger and Guilt, Sadness, Embarrassment

HELPING THE GRIEVING CHILD	
DO'S	DONT'S
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand your own feelings and comfort levels in dealing with death, offering support to others in need when appropriate.</li> <li>• Understand the child's developmental capacity to deal with death.</li> <li>• Create an open climate that encourages talking about feelings.</li> <li>• Express sympathy and support.</li> <li>• Feel free to say you don't know why the death occurred.</li> <li>• Encourage non-verbal expressions of grief: art, writing, music, etc.</li> <li>• Be honest about the facts of the death (including suicide).</li> <li>• Find ways to include the child in the mourning rituals.</li> <li>• Present death in real terms, (e.g., allow child to take in as much as he/she can)</li> <li>• Accept all the child's questions and answer them to the best of your ability.</li> <li>• Allow the child to cry and be angry and to express grief in an appropriate way.</li> <li>• Pay attention to behavior, especially negative behavior. The child may not be able to express feelings in words. Do set appropriate limits on behavior.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let your discomfort prevent you from offering support.</li> <li>• Try to make the child "face the facts" if they seem unable.</li> <li>• Shut off the expression of feelings because of your own discomfort.</li> <li>• Avoid phrases such as, "It's God's will." "You'll get over it."</li> <li>• Try to make up some reason for the death.</li> <li>• Judge any grief expressions as "good" or "bad".</li> <li>• Lie to the child or avoid answering questions.</li> <li>• Tell the child he/she can't go because "he/she can't handle it."</li> <li>• Avoid euphemisms about death (e.g., sleeping, gone away, a blessing, God took)</li> <li>• Tell children their questions are bad or stupid.</li> <li>• Don't say things such as, "Boys don't cry", "Only babies cry", "Don't be sad".</li> <li>• Set appropriate limits and consequences; explain to the child that behavior may be a way of expressing feelings, and encourage expression of feelings.</li> </ul>

SUICIDE RELATED DO'S AND DONT'S	
DO'S	DONT'S
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respectfully, but briefly, acknowledge the suicide.</li> <li>• Be especially vigilant of friends of the deceased.</li> <li>• Be especially vigilant of at-risk students.</li> <li>• Try proactively to influence media coverage in order to minimize attention.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lavish tribute or praise on the suicide victim; it is best that others see this as a route to appreciation or recognition.</li> <li>• Underestimate the contagion, which frequently follows publicized suicides. Be vigilant.</li> </ul>

### DO NOT RESUSCITATE ORDERS

In the event a "Do-Not-Resuscitate" order is received from a licensed physician for a student in the Newtown Public Schools, the school nursing staff may honor the order providing the following criteria are met.

1. A written order from the physician is on file in the student's health record.
2. A D.N.R. bracelet is in place on the student.
3. A copy of the "informed consent" form signed by the parent/guardian is on file in the student's health record.
4. A written emergency care plan is in place for the student.
5. A registered nurse is at the school where the student with the D.N.R bracelet is in attendance.

Adopted 3/1/00

**Issues of Death and Dying / D.N.R. Orders**

**All Hazards Approach**

**Media Crisis Communication Plan**



## THE ALL HAZARDS APPROACH

The responsibility for resolving most critical incidents will reside with local public safety agencies. *Until those agencies arrive on scene*, however, the primary responders will be **14**. While district personnel may not be able to solve the problem, they can take steps to keep an incident from becoming worse. These steps are known as the *Seven Critical Tasks*.

The Seven Critical Tasks are based on the premise that since there is a similar set of characteristics at the onset of most major events, it follows that there is a similar set of responses for getting those incidents under control. The tasks are designed to be performed in the first 30 minutes or so of an incident, the time of the most confusion and danger. Each task may not be applicable for all events, but using the set as a checklist will ensure that our initial response will always be sound. The Seven Critical Tasks are as follows:

### 1. Establish Communications

The first step in handling any crisis is to establish communications. Set up a system that enables you to contact and stay in contact with the people with whom you need to talk. Use whatever means are at your disposal. Open phone lines, clear radio channels, identify runners to deliver messages, whatever it takes. Once communication is established, secure the lines so you always have access to them. Move normal traffic to other phones and channels. Reserve your lines for response activity only.

Besides establishing communications at the scene, a site-based Incident Coordinator (Principal) should contact the district **INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM** to discuss the level of support that might be needed. Depending on the incident, a decision will be made to activate a district-level response to coordinate activities at all affected sites. Communication with the district team should be maintained throughout the incident.

### 2. Identify the Danger Zone

As soon as possible, identify the exact location of the danger zone, the area posing a risk to lives and property. Sometimes it is not just confined to the physical location of the problem. In a hazardous materials incident such as a chemical spill, the danger zone would be the source of the leak plus the immediate area in the direction the chemical is traveling. On a windy day, the area exposed to vapors can be large.

Once the danger zone is established, take steps to limit the risk. No one should be allowed in or out of this area unless an evacuation is necessary. People caught in a danger zone are often better off sheltering in place for the short term. If they are safe where they are, it doesn't make sense to risk moving them.

## **MEDIA CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLAN**

1. When a crisis occurs, the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent should be notified and immediately obtain all the facts in concert with the building principal.
2. The Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent or their designee, the principal and others (e.g. police, fire and health officials), as needed, shall determine the action plan related to communicating the crisis and who shall be the one and only spokesperson.
3. A communication center shall be established that is isolated from the incident. Telephone lines to that office should be designated as the only lines to be used for communication purposes.
4. All issues should be reviewed such as: (a) How will the community be informed and to what degree? (b) What is the chain of communication? (c) Are there any legal considerations?
5. Once a plan has been established, all parties involved in the crisis should be informed.
6. The spokesperson is the only one to speak to and/or answer questions from the media and from the public.
7. In a crisis situation, a designated area will be identified for the media to be assigned (staging areas) until school officials can brief them.

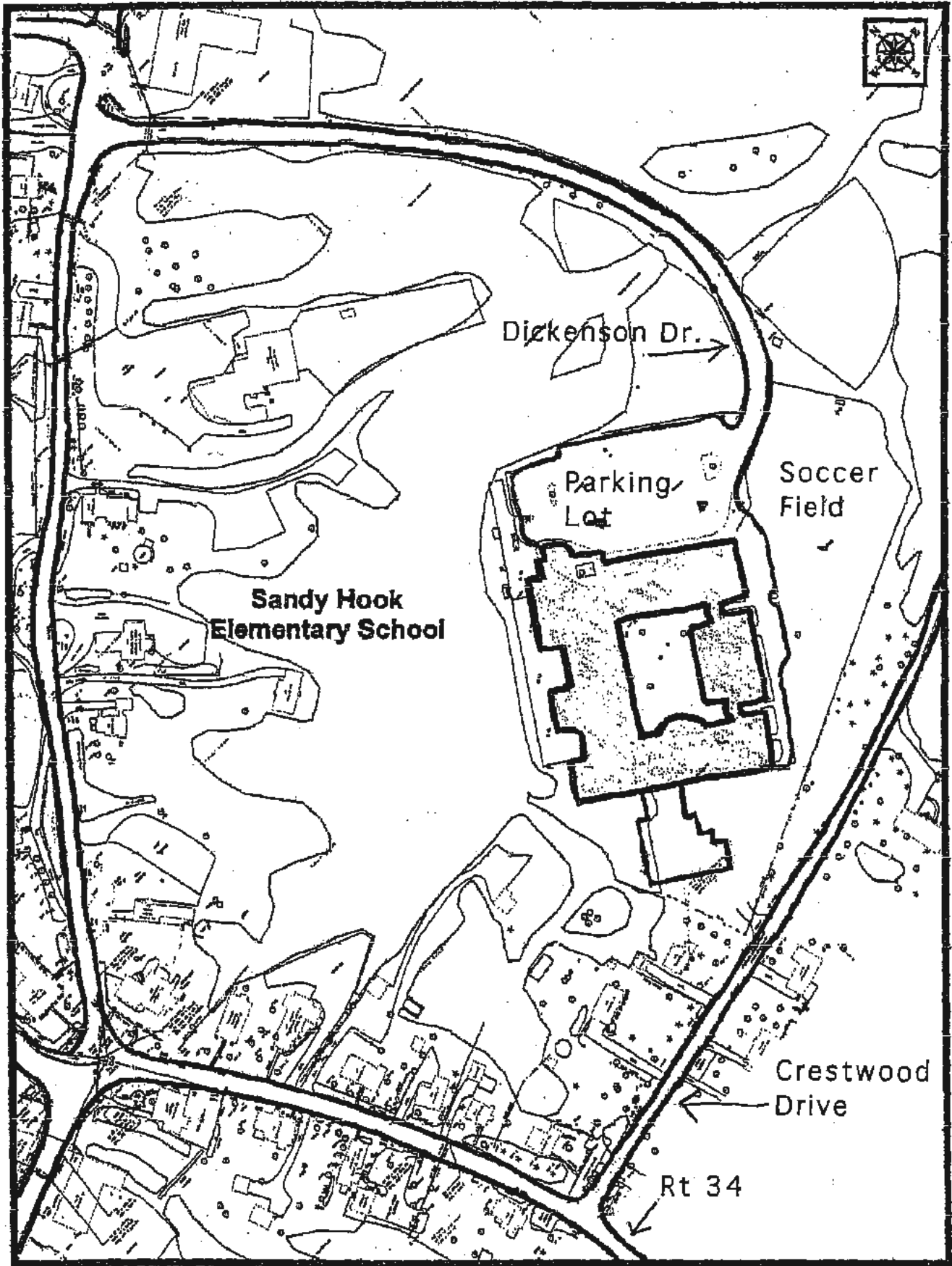
The following list of suggestions can help increase the educational aspect of the TV, newspaper, radio or magazine stories surrounding a crisis and minimize the potential emotional dangers that inadequate reporting may promote. Principals may be asked to speak to the media after the initial crisis has been managed.

1. Set policies and make decisions regarding working with the media BEFORE the occurrence of an emotional event.
2. Direct all media inquiries to the Superintendent of Schools. This avoids confusion in times of crisis and ensures consistency in the information given to the media.
3. Insist that no media representatives are to be allowed on school grounds during school hours. Provide representatives with a time and place when information will be disseminated.
4. Use clear, simple, layman terminology so the readers or viewers can understand.
5. Avoid being defensive. Do not treat the interviewer as an adversary. Acknowledge the difficulty of the media's role and take the position of helpfulness. If you do not know the answer to a question, find out and call back, or put the interviewer in contact with another resource. Place media coverage high on your list of priorities and view it as an asset to your work.
6. Use caution if the interviewer requests to be put in contact with witnesses, alleged offenders, or survivors. Your first priority is to protect your students and minimize the traumatic effects of the crisis situation.
7. Make clear before being recorded or interviewed that you do not think it will be appropriate to discuss specific details of the event (particularly suicide or weapons-related deaths). Avoid sensationalizing. General information is more beneficial.
8. Describe the roles and support of your crisis team, staff members, or community members who were helpful during the initial crisis response.
9. Do not insist on seeing questions ahead of the interview or editing the final copy. The media will only use what fits the purpose, theme or time frame of their medium.

## **Media Crisis Communication Plan**

### **Site Plans**

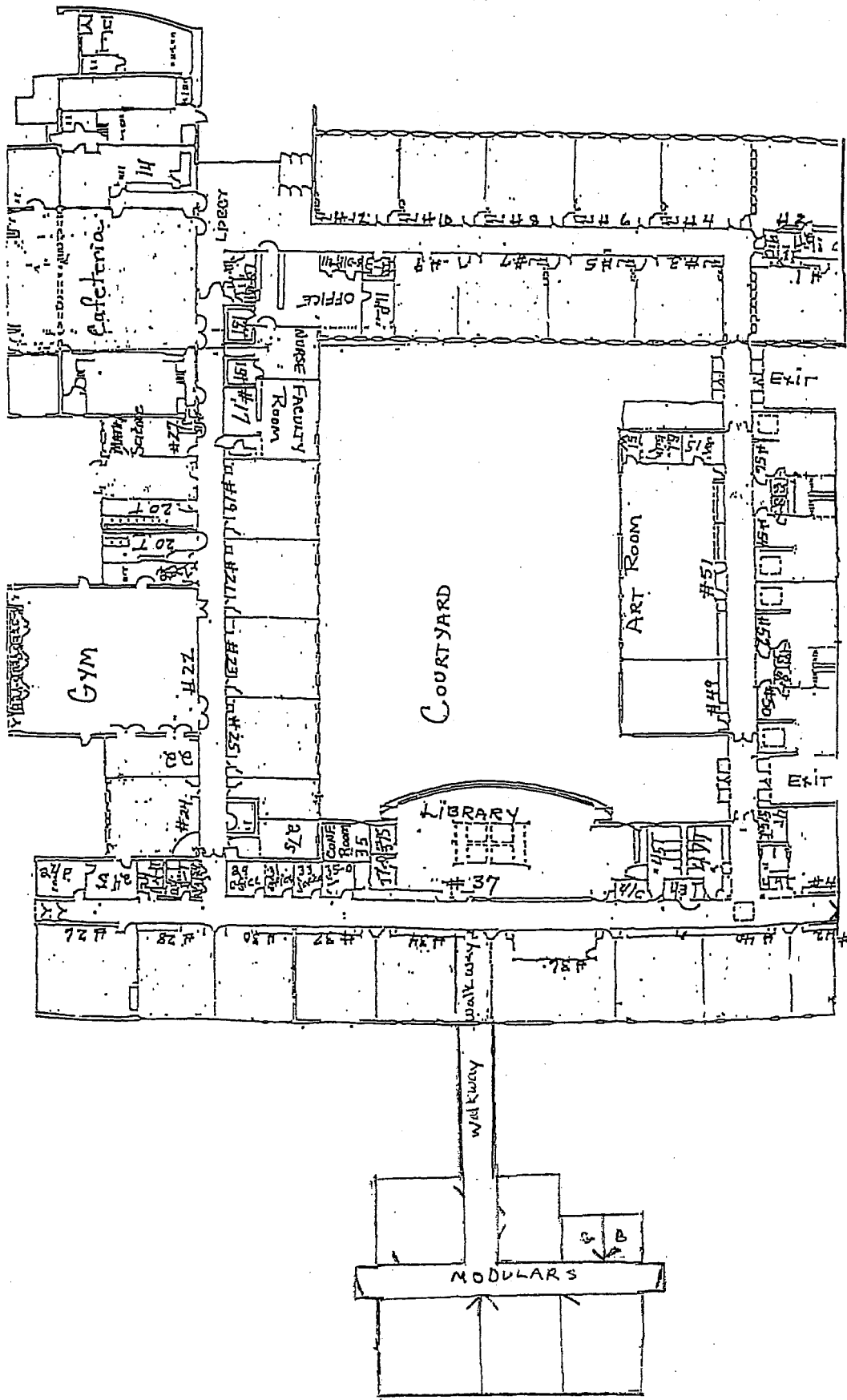




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PARKING LOT

PARKING LOT





## COMMENTS

Our most basic responsibility is to work diligently to ensure the safety of our students and staff. This Emergency Response Plan is part of our efforts to meet this responsibility and is to be used as a guide responding to various situations.

While not every crisis can be anticipated and a response scripted, we can have in place these guidelines for action steps. This brochure is designed to be user friendly and should be kept in a location that can be quickly accessed by staff. As we work in the years ahead, it is important we use all of our experiences to help to further refine and improve this document.

Below are listed some of the individuals who have contributed to this plan, the development of which was coordinated and led by our Director of Security, [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED]. Many thanks to them and to the many others who have assisted in this endeavor.

[REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED]

*Superintendent of Schools*

\* \* \* \*

[REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED], *Director of Security*

[REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED], *Director of Business*

[REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED], *Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds*

[REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED], *Transportation Director*

[REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED], *School Psychologist*

[REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED], *Captain, Newtown Police Department*

[REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED], *Sergeant, Newtown Police Department*

[REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED], *Youth Officer, Newtown Police Department*

[REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED], *Newtown Fire Chief*

[REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED], *Director of Newtown Emergency Services*

## UNKNOWN PERSON/INTRUDERS

Staff, faculty and students should be observant at all times. Be diligent in reporting any and all unknown persons entering the school property, either in the parking lots or inside the facility.

1. Keep a cautious distance from the person while you introduce yourself and offer the person help to establish a valid or a suspicious response.
2. Go to the nearest phone and call [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED] who will notify [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED] of the sighting, if the person is suspicious.

## BUILDING DISRUPTIONS

### RESPONDING TO A DISRUPTION ACCORDING TO THE LEVEL OF SERIOUSNESS AND INTENSITY.

**LEVEL 1.** When a disruption is confined to one area and there is no threat to students or staff, (e.g., intruder or verbally abusive individual):

1. Go to [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED] who will then notify an [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED];
2. Indicate [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED] as the kind of response needed and identify the exact location.
3. Containment and removal with minimum interruption of the educational processes should be the overall practice.

**LEVEL 2.** When disruptive forces pose a direct threat to members of the school community (e.g., threatening, suspicious or angry intruders, gang activity or possibility of weapon possession):

1. Go to [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED] who will notify [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED] of the sighting.
2. Indicate [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED] as the kind of response needed and identify the exact location.
3. Institute classroom "lockdown" with [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED] on the intercom.
4. [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED] to notify Incident Management Team and police if necessary. [REDACTED] 14 [REDACTED]

Unknown Persons/Intruders / Building Disruptions

Evacuation Sites and Transportation

Weather Related Emergencies

Facility Emergencies

Bomb Threats