



Safe School Communities Initiatives

- The Winnipeg School Division believes the safety and security of students and staff is a major priority. While society cannot prevent all crisis situations, schools can be prepared to respond quickly, efficiently and appropriately to ensure the safety of students and staff members when situations do occur. In this regard the Winnipeg School Division has created a variety of initiatives, some of which have been in place for over 15 years, although reviewed and updated regularly.
- Winnipeg School Division (WSD) provides a variety of supports to each of its 77 schools to help them establish safe and caring school communities.
- One of these supports entitled *Developing Safe School Communities* was created almost 10 years ago. Within this document, which is updated regularly, there is a planning guide for developing safe school communities, professional development opportunities, bibliographies, brochures and resource handbooks.
- To help establish a safe school community, a multifaceted approach is used at each Division school, which includes: creating a safe school plan, implementing a continuum of school-wide behaviour support; creating a positive school and classroom culture; implementing violence prevention programs; developing early identification programs; responding to students with severe behavioural problems; developing crisis response plans; and involving parents and community in the development of a safe school community.
- Each school is expected to have a safe school plan. A safe school plan includes a school code of conduct; strategies to create and maintain a positive school and classroom culture; specific behaviour management strategies; and consequences for inappropriate behaviour. The safe school plan is developed in consultation with the parents and students in the school. As part of the safe school plan, safety audits are undertaken, some schools have installed security systems, such as cameras and some have walkie-talkies.
- Professional development included under the umbrella of *Developing Safe School Communities* includes almost 40 different workshops for staff members. The types of workshops include: non-violent crisis intervention; crisis negotiation techniques, restitution, bully-proofing, Second Step, proactive classroom management and how to implement violence prevention in schools.
- At least one administrator in each school has received training in threat assessment from Kevin Cameron, an expert in the field. In addition, some Division staff members have received inservicing to train teams within each school to identify, assess and respond to threats.
- Another support document for schools, which was published by the Division in 1998 and revised in 2003 is the *Guidelines for the Development of a School Crisis Response Plan*. The comprehensive document outlines the components of a school crisis response plan and includes a digital crisis response plan template for schools to use when creating or updating their plans. The user-friendly document also includes a number of chapters including such topics as: medical emergencies, hostile situations, deaths and community resources.

- Each school also has a crisis response plan. The crisis response plan outlines steps for responding to various types of crisis and the duties assigned to school staff members before, during and after the crisis. Any threats are taken seriously and investigated. A crisis response checklist is an important part of the document so that the steps can be easily followed. Each school has a school crisis response team, which is activated immediately should a crisis occur. Training is provided to school crisis teams and school administrators on an annual basis.
- In the event of a crisis, the Division and its schools will immediately work to ensure student and staff safety. This may include involving the police. The Division's Child Guidance Clinic and various outside agencies may become involved as required.
- Some schools have school resource officers (police) who work directly in the schools.
- The Division has a variety of policies in place in regard to helping to create safe schools: GCPDA: Harassment (adopted 1987; revised 2004); JFCBA: Student and Staff Access to On-line Information Resources (adopted 1997); JFG: Student Search and Seizure (1999); JG: Safe Schools (2006); JGD: Suspension of Students (adopted 1992, revised 2006) and JGE Expulsion of Students (adopted 1986, revised 1994).
- All school codes of conduct and crisis response plans have been reviewed and revised to be consistent with the provincial Safe Schools Charter.