

# Student Violence

Points for first responders:

1. Providing aid to those in need is the first priority, but give due consideration to the safety of the teaching staff. Involve several staff members.
2. Calm students and move them to another location.
3. Quickly and accurately report the situation to the head of student affairs.
4. Demonstrate to students that violence is not acceptable under any circumstances.
5. Make a record of the event containing detailed, chronological information.

## Initial Response

### 1. Initial Response.

Stop the violent act:

Several staff members should act together to stop the act and calm students.

- Remove other students from the scene. If they are in a group, separate them.
- Standing slightly more than arm's length away, repeat "stop," or other simple commands in a loud and clear voice.
- While giving due consideration to personal safety, take action as necessary to defend others, such as physically restraining a student.
- Immediately remove any knives or other dangerous items.

Move the students to another location.

At the same time, check for injuries:

⇒ Checking for injuries and helping any injured students is the first priority.

⇒ Carefully identify the degree of injury with the school's health care professional.

-Severe-

- Call an ambulance, using the school's landline phone if possible. Nearby staff should provide first aid treatment.
- A staff member with a cellular phone should accompany the injured student in the ambulance.

-Moderate-

- This staff member should provide up-to-date information back to the school.
- The school's health care professional should apply first aid treatment. Then, a staff member with a cellular phone should take the injured student to the hospital.

-Mild-

- This staff member should provide up-to-date information back to the school.
- The school's health care professional should apply first aid treatment and observe the injury.

Reporting of Incidents and Information Management.

⇒ Report any incidents to the administrative staff (the principal, vice-principal and the head of student affairs).

- Crisis management is generally organized top-down. An appropriate response depends on accurate information.
  - Under normal circumstances, information should be relayed from the head of student affairs to the vice-principal, and then to the principal, but during an emergency the principal should be alerted as quickly as possible.
  - Collect information thoroughly and record it in chronological order, as detailed and correctly as possible. Report this to the head of student affairs or vice-principal.
- ⇒ Contacting the victim's and assailant's parents/guardians.
- In the event that the student was taken to a hospital, immediately contact the student's parents/guardians to briefly explain the situation and give basic information including the name of the hospital.
- ⇒ Contacting the Board of Education (see "Making Reports").
- Report the situation to the Board of Education as necessary and as determined by the school principal. A phone call or fax is sufficient.
  - If the police or news media are involved, report the situation to the Board of Education as soon as possible.
- ⇒ Contacting the police.
- If the principal determines that the school will have difficulty in dealing with the situation on its own, alert the Board of Education and contact the police without hesitation.
  - At the same time, please keep the assailant in mind, as summoning the police could easily result in that student being arrested on the spot or having charges filed against him or her.
- ⇒ Contacting Other Schools.
- In the event that a student from another school was involved, immediately contact that school and work together in dealing with the situation.
- ⇒ Contacting the Board of Education.
- Report the situation to the Board of Education as necessary and as determined by the school principal. A phone call or fax is sufficient.
  - If the police or news media are involved, report the situation to the Board of Education as soon as possible.

## **2. Assessing the situation.**

When interviewing a student about the incident, prepare for a wide range of contingencies. Absolutely do not allow the student to be alone.

Be sure to ask about:

The details of the situation, cause or motive, steps leading up to the event, who was involved, the background of the situation, etc.

Interviewing the victim.

- Along with several staff members, a health care professional or the student's homeroom teacher should lead a discussion with the student in a separate room.
- Make the student feel safe, and encourage him or her to fully explain what

happened without fear of a reoccurrence.

- The student will likely be very emotional at this time. Allow him or her to voice these emotions freely. Be a good listener.

Interviewing the assailant.

- Along with several staff members, the head of student affairs should lead a discussion with the student in a separate room.
- Make the student understand that violence is not okay. Show him or her that things which are not allowed outside of school are also not allowed in school.
- Do not ask the student questions in a scolding manner, but rather in a way that shows interest in simply getting to the bottom of what happened.
- Listen to everything that the assailant has to say without interrupting or making a verdict.
- Try not to spend an excessive amount of time listening to the student's explanation. However, remember to bring beverages and snacks as it will take some time.

Hearing from other students and witnesses.

- Along with several staff members, a teacher familiar with these students should lead a discussion in a separate room.
- Ask questions to ascertain their level of involvement in the incident, and determine whether or not there were students who encouraged the incident.

### **3. Response Planning Meeting.**

Emergency response meeting with the victim and assailant's parents/guardians.

- Compare and consolidate information.
- Discuss how to respond to and support the victim and victim's parents/guardians.
- Discuss how to respond to and support the assailant and assailant's parents/guardians.
- Discuss how to respond to other students.
- In high schools, consider disciplinary action.
- In middle schools, consider suspension from school.

Emergency staff meeting.

⇒ Make sure all members of the teaching staff understand the situation.

- Prepare some materials summarizing the incident

⇒ Discuss how the staff should respond to this sort of incident in the future and who should have what role.

- Prepare some materials explaining the general direction of how the staff should respond to such incidents and use these to conduct the meeting.

⇒ In high schools, consider disciplinary action.

⇒ In elementary and middle schools, consider suspension from school.

Short to Mid-term Response.

### **4. Responding to Students and Parents/Guardians.**

The assailant.

⇒ Direct support and instruction toward preventing another episode.

- The student's homeroom teacher or another trusted, familiar teacher should approach the student together with the head of student affairs.
- The two teachers should take on different roles. The head of student affairs should reprimand and lecture the student. At the same time, the teacher who is trusted by or familiar with the student should appeal to them to listen to and understand what the other is saying.
- More than a simple lecture, it is important to use this time to compel the student to reflect on his or her actions. Patiently point out problems with the student's choices and allow the student time to fully think through the events and show remorse.
- While doing so, bear in mind the student's background and individual circumstance, their relationship with others at school, etc. Make an effort to understand the student as well.

⇒ Discussing how to apologize.

- This is not a formal event or requirement. Calmly and patiently guide the student towards feeling the need to apologize to the victim.
- School guidance staff and counselors should also provide emotional support.

This should be done in tandem with the following:

The assailant's parents/guardians.

⇒ Explain the basic facts of the event either in a visit to the home or in a meeting at the school.

- Several teachers, such as the homeroom teacher, administrative staff, and the guidance counselor should meet personally with the parents/guardians.
- Staff should prepare beforehand some documents explaining the incident and decide such things as the purpose of the meeting, division of roles, and how to actually conduct the meeting.
- Greet the parents/guardians warmly and avoid overly criticizing their son or daughter.
- If there are several assailants, treat them all impartially.
- Set a time for the meeting and do not deviate from it.

⇒ Discussing future action.

- While bearing in mind the feelings of the parents/guardians, think about the support provided to the students in question.
- Explain the shape of the support given to students by the school. Make it clear what can be provided by the school and what cannot.
- Discuss how to treat the victim in the future, such as by apologizing.

The victim.

⇒ If visiting a student in the hospital:

- The principal should visit as soon as possible.
- If the student is hospitalized, try to visit every day or as often as possible, keeping in mind the emotional toll on the student and the student's parents/guardians.

- ⇒ Support for the student should be based on empathy and understanding.
  - Promise to the student that the teachers will be there to support him or her. Encourage the student to make an effort to improve his or her relationship with other students.
  - Make it clear to the student that retaliation against violence is also violence and that it will not be tolerated.
  - If the student has admitted to having taken actions which led to the violent encounter, discuss those actions and caution him or her.
  - School guidance staff and counselors should also provide emotional support.

This should be done in tandem with the following:

The victim's parents/guardians.

- ⇒ Explain basic details of what happened before the student speaks with his or her parents/guardians of the incident.
  - Request permission to visit their home.
- ⇒ Visiting the student's home:
  - Make the visit together with the student's home room teacher and administrative staff.
  - The first priority should be apologizing for the fact that such an incident occurred at school.
  - Explain the details of the incident and discuss the issue sincerely.
  - Explain how the school plans to deal with the assailant, and how the school has responded to the rest of the students.
  - Discuss filing charges with the police. If the student and parents/guardians intend to file charges, explain the need for a doctor's certificate.

## **5. Miscellaneous.**

- ⇒ Guidance for all of the school's students.
  - The school's staff should thoroughly discuss and confirm the time and date, place, names of students involved in the event, what was and will be told to students, and a division of roles beforehand.
  - Provide accurate information while striving to respect the privacy of the students involved.
  - Caution students of the danger of gossip and speculation. Ask them to voluntarily refrain from it.
  - If there were any mistakes on the part of the school in responding to the incident, apologize sincerely.
- ⇒ Requests for support to other organizations
  - If information regarding a student's background from a previous school or facility is needed, contact the previous school or facility.
  - If consultation with a specialist regarding psychology or physiology is needed, contact the relevant institution.
  - In the event that temporary custody for a student becomes necessary, contact a child

- guidance center.
- ⇒ Contacting the Board of Education.
  - In working with a media outlet or related organization, request support from the Board of Education as needed.
  - If suspending a student at an elementary or middle school, refer to “Suspending Students.”
- ⇒ If holding an emergency meeting with the student’s parents/guardians, refer to “Emergency Meetings with Parents.”
- ⇒ If holding a press conference or responding to a media outlet, refer to “Dealings with the Media.”
- ⇒ If submitting a report to the Board of Education, refer to “Making Reports”.

### Mid to Long Term Response.

Improving school policies to prevent re-occurrences.

- ⇒ Do not ignore small incidents in the interest of being kind to the students. Make it clear that there is a zero tolerance policy in place.
  - Clarify standards of behavior.
  - Keeping students and parents/guardians informed of school policies and expectations will build a relationship of mutual trust.
  - Be firm and persistent (see “Destruction of Property”).
- ⇒ Improving relationships among the students through hands on activities.
  - At elementary, middle, and high schools, make use of the “Bonding Activities” project.
  - At high schools, make use of the “Making Friends, Making Leaders” program.
- ⇒ Hold teaching training workshops on preventing delinquency.
- ⇒ Hold teaching training workshops where previous examples of student violence and teacher responses can be shown and discussed.
- ⇒ Strengthen the school’s relationship with parents.

Cooperation with related organizations.

- ⇒ Understanding student behavioral trends.
  - Be aware of places where students congregate.
  - Actively collaborate and exchange information with nearby schools.
- ⇒ Develop a system whereby information about events that occur outside of school can be quickly relayed to relevant staff.
  - Administrative staff should periodically visit nearby public areas, such as shops, train stations, and other places frequented by students, to develop a relationship with the people there and enlist their assistance in protecting students.
  - Bring a business card or other material containing contact information when making these visits.

### **About the CAP Program**

The Child Assault Prevention (CAP) Program teaches children how to protect themselves from violent acts such as peer assault, molestation, stranger abduction, child abuse, and sexual assault. Through role-play and discussions, children learn that they have the right to be safe, strong, and free. They also learn three ways to protect their rights: saying no, running away, and calling someone. The CAP Program differs from previously existing safety education programs in that it teaches children that they themselves are important and nurtures their intrinsic “energy to live.”

The CAP Program is in workshop format. Rather than passively receive knowledge, participants think and develop opinions on their own, then role-play various situations to advance their understanding. There are separate workshops tailored for both children and adults (teachers and parents/guardians).

General residents of the town or city can voluntarily participate in the CAP Program as well, giving them the chance to contribute to the safety of their community.

#### History

1978 Originated in the United States as a project of Women Against Rape (WAR).

1985 Introduced to Japan.

1995 Program activities begin in Japan.

1998 CAP Center Japan is established.

2001 CAP Center Japan is established as a non-profit organization.

Today The CAP Program operates in 16 countries worldwide.

From CAP Center Japan’s website. (<http://www.cap-j.net>)

CAP Groups in Yamaguchi Prefecture		(date established)
Hidamari CAP Yamaguchi	Ube City	April, 1999
CAP Shimonoseki	Shimonoseki City	September, 1999
Iwakuni CAP	Iwakuni City	January, 2000
CAP Saikyou	Yamaguchi City	September, 2001
CAP Shunan	Shunan City	May, 2007