



Vermont School Safety Custodial Interference Facilitated Dialogue

Objective – This facilitated dialogue is designed to initiate a conversation about how your school would respond to a custodial interference situation and to familiarize participants with current school emergency response plans, policies, and procedures.

Guidelines:

- This is not a test. This dialogue is intended to open the lines of communication in a low-stress environment
- Responses to questions should be based on current response capacity (if there are response capacity challenges identified during the exercise, they should be added to the list of action items for future planning initiatives)
- Fight the problem, not the scenario
- This conversation is the ideal setting to consider different response approaches and suggest improvements to current resources, plans and training
- Ensure that all action items identified have a point of contact identified to track the improvement process

Scenario:

September 5th – During the first few days of school, a mother of one of the students in your school (*Ms. Smith*) reports a family issue with her husband with whom she is getting a divorce. On September 14th, the mother of this child presents you with legal documents stating that the father is not to have contact with the child (*Bobby Smith*) and the father isn't suppose to be within 500 feet of the child's home, school or other places where they child might be located. This family has had issues in the past and the father on several occasions has come to the school and gotten into verbal altercations with some of the school's staff.

September 16th – Bobby Smith arrives at school and informs one of his teachers that his father is very upset with his mother. Bobby tells his teacher that yesterday, his father spoke with him on the phone and told him that he was going to be picking him up from school to take him to a doctor's appointment in the next few days and that he had spoken with the school and they would be releasing him for the day.

Discussion Questions

- What actions if any, should the teacher/school take at this point? What specific procedures are followed by school officials?



- Based on your school's policies, plans or procedures, what strategies are developed to deal with this situation? (Who specifically is involved in developing this strategy?)
- At what point are outside agencies informed of this situation and by who/whom?
- How do you communicate with these agencies and are there specific points of contact at these agencies to talk to?
- Is there someone within your organization that is specifically identified to handle this situation?
- Who else is informed of this situation and why? Are there privacy issues involved that limit the sharing of this information?
- Do you attempt to communicate with Bobby's mother?

September 18th, 8:15 a.m. – Bobby Smith arrives at school today and tells his teacher that his father is coming to pick him up for a dentist appointment at 9:00 a.m.

Discussion Questions

- What actions if any, should the teacher/school take at this point?
- Based on your schools policies, plans and procedures, what strategies are developed to deal with this situation? (Who specifically is involved in developing this strategy)
- Are any outside agencies informed of this situation? If so, which ones and why are the called?
- Who within the school is informed of this situation?
- Are any specific response actions taken within the school? (Secure the Building, Lockdown?) How would these actions be communicated to school staff?
- Is the District Office notified of this event?
- Do you attempt to communicate with Bobby's mother?

September 18th, 8:20 a.m. – Bobby Smith's father arrives in the parking lot of the school and calls the school to ask for his son to be released for a doctor's appointment. He tells school staff that Bobby will be returned to school by 10:00 a.m.

Discussion Questions

- What actions if any should the administrator taking the call take?
- Based on your schools policies, plans and procedures, what strategies are developed to deal with this situation? (Who specifically is involved in developing this strategy)
- If not previously contacted, are local police/county sheriff/state police contacted reference this situation?
- Are any specific response actions taken within the school? (Secure the Building, Lockdown?) How would these actions be communicated to school staff?



- Is there an Incident Commander identified for this situation? If so, who?
- Is the District Office notified of this event?
- Are any mass notifications made as a result of this event? If so, what are they and who is responsible for the messaging?

September 18th, 8:20 a.m. – Bobby Smith’s father is seen driving out of the parking lot and it is unknown whether he plans on returning later that day.

Discussion Questions

- Based on the current situation, what actions are taken by the school?
- How do you communicate with law enforcement and what is the communication plan to keep everyone informed of this developing situation?
- Are any mass notifications made as a result of this continuing event? If so, what are they and who is responsible for the messaging?
- Would a communications plan be developed for any media inquiries that may have resulted for actions taken at the school? If so, who would be involved in developing this plan and who would be in charge of implementing it?

September 18th (end of school day)

Discussion Questions

- What plans would be put into place for the following day reference this situation? Who would these plans be shared with in the school and why?
- Would these plans be shared with outside agencies and Bobby Smith’s mother?
- Would a formal threat assessment be completed to determine future threat possibilities? Who would be a part of this threat assessment team and what “process” would be used to conduct this assessment?
- Would law enforcement be involved in future crisis planning decisions involving this situation?

Food for Thought?

1. Who in your school has attended formal Incident Command training?
2. Who in your school knows how to conduct a formal threat assessment?
3. Do you have Memorandums of Understanding with your local first response organizations?
4. Does your school have more than one person trained to make mass notifications?