

SAFETY MATTERS

RISK MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE

AUGUST 07, 2026

- Recognize and Prevent Escalation
- Prepare Staff and Work Area
- Respond Safely During an Incident
- Report, Debrief, and Follow Up

SUPPORTING SAFE AND POSITIVE STUDENT INTERACTIONS

OBJECTIVE Provide school employees with an overview of practical strategies to recognize, prevent, and safely respond to challenging student behaviors, helping reduce the risk of injury to students and staff.

Student behavior can create an injury risk in any school setting. Behaviors such as pushing, hitting, kicking, biting, grabbing, throwing objects, unsafe running, or fighting may place students, staff, or others at risk. These behaviors may be influenced by factors such as frustration, fear, pain, communication challenges, or other unmet needs. Staff should focus on early recognition, prevention, and safe responses before situations escalate. This information is intended as a general overview to support injury prevention and does not replace district procedures, required training, or student-specific plans.

RECOGNIZE AND PREVENT ESCALATION

- **Recognize.** Watch for early warning signs.
- **Respond.** Stay calm and use simple, respectful communication.
- **Redirect.** Offer choices and reinforce positive behavior.
- **Reduce Risk.** Avoid confrontation and minimize stressors.





PREPARE STAFF AND THE WORK AREA

- **Be Prepared.** Know your response plan.
- **Dress for Success.** Consider clothing and footwear that support safe movement and minimize the risk of injury.
- **Be Trained.** Understand response procedures and approved protective measures.
- **Work Together.** Don't respond alone to high-risk situations.
- **Stay Safe.** Keep exits clear and remove hazards.
- **Use Approved Equipment.** Use only district-approved protective measures or equipment following required training, inspection, cleaning, and storage procedures.

RESPOND SAFELY DURING AN INCIDENT

- **Call for Help Early.** Clearly communicate what is happening, the location, and whether anyone is injured or in immediate danger.
- **Maintain a Safe Position.** Keep a safe distance, leave an exit path available, and avoid cornering or blocking the student unless necessary to prevent immediate harm.
- **Reduce Risk.** Move bystanders away, minimize distractions, and remove nearby hazards when it is safe to do so.
- **Use Physical Intervention Only as Authorized.** Never use force for compliance. Use district-approved emergency interventions only when immediate safety requires them, and only if trained and authorized.
- **Stay Calm and Follow Procedures.** Focus on immediate safety, request emergency or law enforcement assistance when needed, and address discipline or instruction after the situation has stabilized.

REPORT, DEBRIEF, AND FOLLOW UP

- **Report and Respond.** Seek medical attention when needed and promptly notify the appropriate supervisor or administrator.
- **Document the Incident.** Complete all required incident, injury, near-miss, and emergency reports, even for minor injuries.
- **Debrief and Learn.** Review what occurred, identify warning signs, evaluate what worked, and identify opportunities to improve future responses.
- **Improve Prevention.** Update supervision, communication, staffing, training, environmental controls, or student-specific support plans as needed.
- **Support Recovery.** Recognize the emotional impact of incidents and encourage affected employees and students to access available support resources.

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES

- [CA Department of Industrial Relations – Cal/OSHA Publications](#)
- [California Association of Health and Education Linked Professions \(CAHELP\)](#)
- [Council for Exceptional Children – Learning Library](#)
- [Crisis Prevention Institute: De-escalation Training](#)
- [East Valley SELPA – Structuring the Home and Classroom for Student Success Shannon V & Courtney B](#)
- [School Action for Safety and Health \(SASH\): Preventing Injuries from Student Behaviors](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education: School Safety and Security](#)
- [Ventura County SELPA: Paraeducators/Instructional Aides Training Manual](#)
- [West End SELPA – Effective Reinforcement \(DISC\) | Videos & Movies on Vimeo](#)

This California Schools JPA fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice.





SIGN-IN SHEET

SUPPORTING SAFE AND POSITIVE STUDENT INTERACTIONS

Facilitator: _____ Facilitator's Signature: _____

Date: _____ Organization: _____ Department: _____

Participants:

Name: _____	Signature: _____
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