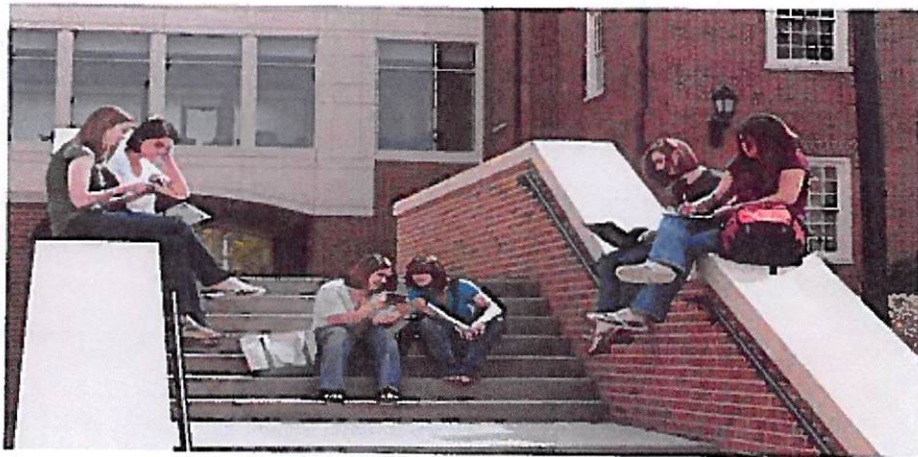


Physical Environment

Physical Environment



The Physical Environment component includes the physical and aesthetic surroundings and the psychosocial climate and culture of the school. Factors that influence the physical environment include the school building and the area surrounding it, any biological or chemical agents that are detrimental to health, and physical conditions such as temperature, noise, and lighting. The psychological environment includes the physical, emotional, and social conditions that affect the well being of students and staff. Building healthy, safe, high performance and sustainable learning environments enhances student and teacher performance and supports culture and community vitality.

A healthy school is vital to a healthy community. Creating and sustaining a healthy and safe school environment requires the continued commitment and involvement of the school and community to address the ever-changing needs and circumstances affecting our students' health and safety.



"A safe school is foundational to the success of the academic mission"
— Ronald Stephens

Healthy School Environment

On a day-to-day basis, schools are among the safest places for our nation's children. To ensure that our schools remain safe, it is important that school districts develop and implement sound policies and procedures.

The Office of Safe and Orderly Schools has designed guidelines and policies to assist those who are responsible for the health and safety of students and staff while they are at school, on school grounds, on their way to or from school, and involved in school-sponsored activities. Within the Office of Safe and Orderly Schools you can find these divisions that stress the importance of successful, community-wide partnerships in the development of procedures and policies that most effectively support the operation and maintenance of healthy, safe, orderly and disciplined school environments.

School Buildings and Grounds:

<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/safe-and-orderly-schools/school-building>

Crucial to the successful education of our children is a healthy learning environment that includes structurally safe facilities that satisfactorily comply with environmental standards and conditions.

Each year, more than 200,000 children go to the emergency rooms with injuries associated with playground equipment. A **playground checklist** is provided on the website listed above. On the website, you can also find the **Process Standard #31 Monitoring Tool** that can be used to ensure that school buildings and grounds are safe places for students..



School Safety:

<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/safe-and-orderly-schools/school-safety>

Safe schools are fundamental to students' school successes and achievements. Consequently, providing a safe and orderly school environment remains an ever-present priority of the Mississippi Department of Education. School safety should be addressed through a comprehensive approach that focuses on prevention, intervention and response planning. School Safety includes the areas of physical security, emergency operations and school discipline. On the website listed above, you will find a form to report unlawful activities, information about School Resource and Safety Officers, and other important school safety resources.

CAUTION

The Stay Safe Hot line—toll free, 1-866-960-6472

Call this number to share school safety concerns without sharing your name. It is totally anonymous and available 24/7. Report situations that may endanger the people at your school or school-sponsored activity. The Office of Healthy Schools at the Department of Education is here to listen and take action.

Healthy School Environment, continued....



Crisis Management:

<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/safe-and-orderly-schools/crisis-management>

On the Crisis Management site listed above, you can find the **Crisis Management Plan Template** that can serve as a guide for local districts in developing their crisis management plans. Each plan should be developed to meet the needs of the district with the realization that emergencies and crisis that affect our schools and children can and do happen. The crisis management plan should change as a school's needs change. It should be a comprehensive crisis response management plan that addresses mitigation/prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

Bullying / Prevention

Code 37-11-20 (1972) states that it is unlawful for any person to intimidate, threaten or coerce, or attempt to do such things, to any person enrolled in any school for the purposes of interfering with the right of that person to attend school classes or of causing him not to attend classes.

Senate Bill 2015 was passed in 2010 that:

- Prohibited bullying or harassing behavior in public schools
- Defined bullying or harassing behavior
- Defined hostile environment
- Required all local school districts to adopt a policy prohibiting bullying and harassing behavior

The goal of an anti-bullying policy should be to maintain an environment free from bullying and harassing behavior by providing guidelines to be followed. The intent of the policy is that any student, school employee or volunteer who feels he/she has been a victim of bullying or harassing behavior shall report such conduct to a teacher, principal, counselor or a school official.

Resources for bullying prevention include;

Bully Free — <http://www.bullyfree.com>

Coaching Boys INTO Men — <http://www.coachescorner.org/>

Fear Stops Here — Fearstopshere.com

Mean Girls Aren't Cool — www.meangirlsnotcool.com

Stop Bullying Now — www.stopbullying.gov

STOP Cyberbullying — stopcyberbullying.com



Healthy School Environment, continued

Pupil Transportation:

<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/safe-and-orderly-schools/pupil-transportation>

Because thousands of Mississippi children begin and end their days with a trip on a school bus, transportation safety is an ongoing focus of the Office of Safe and Orderly Schools. Staff members provide assistance to school districts on federal and state laws and guidelines as well board policies concerning pupil transportation. Go to the website listed above to access numerous resources for pupil transportation. For resources relating to **school-bus safety**, go to <http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/safe-and-orderly-schools/school-bus-safety>.



Driver Education Program:

<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/safe-and-orderly-schools/driver-education>

The task facing driver educators is as complex as it is important. Certainly, driver educators must provide the information and experiences that will enable students to acquire basic vehicle handling skills. At the same time, instructors must instill in students an understanding and appreciation of the practices and principles of safe driving to include the skills and knowledge necessary to make responsible decisions that promote good citizenship. Contact numbers for the Driver Education Office at the Mississippi Department of Education are:

Phone (601) 359 -1028

Fax (601) 359 - 3184