

# Hostage Situation Procedure



Developmental Research School  
at the University of Florida

## Purpose

All school and office personnel must be prepared to carry out plans in the event of a hostage situation in the school. In the event of this incident occurring, the following actions should be taken to maintain the safety of all students, faculty, and staff.

## Scope

This policy applies to all P.K. Yonge students, faculty, and staff faced with a hostage situation.

## Definitions

Hostage taking is defined as the seizing or detention of an individual coupled with a threat to kill, injure or continue to detain such individual in order to compel a third person or governmental organization to take some action. (18 U.S.C. 1203)(18 U.S.C. 103)

## Response Procedures

Hostage situations are among the most serious and complex incidents which can impact public school systems. Usually, hostage-takers are either mentally ill, political or religious extremists, or fleeing criminals seeking a hiding place. Typically, the hostage taker is agitated and unpredictable. Consequently, he/she should be considered extremely dangerous.

Initiate **Active Threat Procedures** or evacuate if safe to do so.

Additionally:

- If the attempted hostage taking was preceded by an active shooter-type attack, lockdown, evade and/or resist are likely your best options.
- Hostage taking does not occur instantly. If you have the opportunity, lockdown or evade.
- If taken hostage, comply with the hostage taker's instructions, UNLESS you believe violence is imminent. If you believe hostages are about to be killed, attempting to evade and/or resist might be your best option.

Immediately notify the front office, and identify yourself, give the location, nature of the situation, and any other pertinent information.

Call 911. Identify yourself, give the location, nature of the situation, and any other pertinent information.

Those outside the school building should be evacuated away from the building to the rally point or to the safe area.

Assist law enforcement as directed. Expect law enforcement officers to enter the building rapidly without warning. When confronted by officers, raise your hands above your head and identify yourself.

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## **Outside of the Hostage-Taking Area**

If a hostage situation develops, call 911 Identify yourself, give the location, nature of the situation, and any other pertinent information.

Attempt to evacuate everyone from the immediate area. Do not attempt to evacuate everyone if it would create an even more dangerous situation or enhance the chance of injury. Make no attempt to establish contact with the hostage taker. If, however, he/she makes demands, listen carefully and do not attempt to solicit additional information. Advise the hostage taker that you will pass on the demands.

Take no further action. Await the arrival of the law enforcement and their Hostage Negotiation Team. Upon arrival, the law enforcement will evaluate the situation and give further direction regarding any evacuation attempts. Be prepared to give the law enforcement officers as much information on the hostage situation as you can (i.e., description of hostage taker; whether he/she displayed a weapon and if so what type; demands made (if any); number of people being held hostage and their approximate age, etc).

Provide a floor plan of the building when law enforcement arrives.