# Supporting school issues through a whole-school approach

Successful relationships

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| Police district  | School name | School demographics | Submitted by |
| Auckland City | Sunnydene Special School (Senior School) | Urban school rated for students with disabilities Decile band 4–6 | Snr Const. D. JamiesonSchool Community Officer |

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| Summary | Increasing students' personal safety. |
| Issue | The school wished to address the personal safety of all its high-school-aged and older students at school, at home, and particularly when out in the wider community. |
| Identification and prioritisation | The school management identified that the personal safety of a small number of students might have been compromised earlier in the year when some of them wandered away from their homes and went out into the community without a caregiver. The school was implementing a new programme to place more of the older students out in a hostel situation in the community. The school needed to ensure that older students knew how to keep safe out in the community.This school was identified as a high priority school because of its demographics. |
| Short-term goal | To ensure that students did not wander out into the community unaccompanied by their caregiver, where they could get lost and not know how or where to get help. |
| Long-term goal | To ensure that students are able to: * maintain their personal safety by following safe practices when out in the community
* interact appropriately with others
* know how to get help or report abuse.
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| Prevention activities | Activities that occurred within a whole-school approach included: School ethos and environment* The school has polices in place to maintain a safe learning environment.
* The staff are skilled and trained in dealing with the students’ special needs.
* [Keeping Ourselves Safe](http://www.police.govt.nz/advice/personal-and-community-advice/school-portal/resources/successful-relationships/keeping) (KOS) resources were supplied to the school.

Community connections* School teachers and therapists met with Police (SCO) to discuss how best to meet the needs of the students.
* School management continues to keep families informed of the need to monitor and supervise students when they go out into the community.
* School management and the SCO compiled an information sheet for Police staff on how to interact positively with persons with autism. To foster the positive assimilation of the special needs students into the area Police staff in the locality of the proposed student hostel were provided with this information sheet.

Curriculum teaching and learning* The SCO held sessions with the students on personal safety, road safety, and the role of the Police. The SCO also engaged students in role plays to demonstrate and reinforce what to do in challenging situations out in the community, how to keep safe, and how to get help from the appropriate people when they need it.
* Relevant material from [KOS](http://www.police.govt.nz/advice/personal-and-community-advice/school-portal/resources/successful-relationships/keeping) is taught by teachers as and when required.
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| Impact | There have been no recent reported incidents of concern. Through the role plays students have demonstrated improved skills and knowledge about how to get help when needed, how to contact emergency services, how to avoid situations of personal danger and abuse, and to report any such incidents to staff and caregivers. The students’ trust and confidence in the Police was also visibly increased.  |
| Next steps | The SCO will maintain contact with school staff, and assist in resolving any further issues, and monitor progress of the proposed student hostel. |
| Obstacles | Many of the students are non-verbal and can communicate only through electronic media devices. This may increase their vulnerability and create greater risk for their personal safety when venturing out in society unaccompanied by their caregiver. Constraints on time, transport and staffing resources limited the school’s ability to extend learning with the SCO outside the classroom.  |
| Improvements | The knowledge gained through the school sessions is to be reinforced as part of the staff’s regular school routine – for example, when taking students out into the community on field trips.  |
| Conclusion | The school is proud of the way its students interacted in their learning with the SCO, and of how they demonstrated the necessary essential skills to keep safe in a variety of situations.  |