

Introduction.

Safety on college campuses has become a top concern of parents and students over the last several years, due to tragic occurrences involving missing students and violent crimes in and around college residences.

Federal and state laws have been enacted in an effort to address certain deficiencies in this area. In 1990, for example, the new federal Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act required, among other things, that colleges and universities publish campus crime data and institute procedures for timely reporting of crime to law enforcement.

In 1999, New York enacted the Campus Security Act, which requires all colleges and universities in the state to develop formal plans for the prompt investigation of missing students and violent offenses committed on campus.

This legislation was prompted by the unexplained disappearance of Suzanne Lyall from the State University of New York at Albany in 1998. Suzanne's parents continue to pursue every lead to find their daughter. The enclosed message from Douglas and Mary Lyall underscores the importance of the information contained in this brochure.



This brochure provides parents and students with information to promote safety on campus, to make college students safe and secure as they enjoy some of the most wonderful years of their lives.

How Does My Campus Safety Measure Up?

Schools with aggressive crime reporting and a low tolerance for criminal behavior tend to provide safer places of learning where students can focus on their educational goals.

Questions to ask the Admissions Office, Dean of Students or the Campus Public Safety Department include:

- ✓ Does the school publish campus crime information as required by the Student Right-To-Know and Campus Security Act of 1990? If so, obtain a copy.
- ✓ Do annual crime statistics include reports from the dean's office, residence life office and counseling centers?
- ✓ Ask how many and what type of cases were handled by the school judicial committee during the previous year.
- ✓ Are security logs open for public inspection?
- ✓ Are policies and penalties related to campus crime explicitly addressed during orientation and published by the school?
- ✓ Does the school have written policies and procedures for handling alcohol, drug and weapons laws?
- ✓ Does the school provide immediate medical, psychological, and legal aid to victims, as required by the Federal Campus Sexual Assault Victim's Bill of Rights?
- ✓ Do dormitories have a central entrance/exit where access is restricted and preferably, monitored. If the reception area is not staffed, an outside telephone should be available to visitors who must call a resident to gain access.
- ✓ Dormitories and room doors should be equipped with good quality locking mechanisms (which are always secured).
- ✓ Dormitory residents should insist that residential assistants and security patrols routinely check for unlocked and/or "propped" exterior doors and windows.

What Can Students Do To Promote Safety?

1. Exercise caution with regard to having photos and personal information disseminated in campus publications. Students have been "targeted" through use of this information.
2. Survey the campus and adjacent areas. Determine and use the safest routes between your residence, work, classes and activity locations. Are emergency telephones available? Are walkways frequently traveled or somewhat isolated? Are parking lots well lit and patrolled frequently? If you need to seek help quickly, are there places nearby where people tend to congregate?
3. Whether in person or on the Internet, know who you are befriending. Do not disclose personal information or place yourself in a vulnerable situation until you know people and know them well!
4. Create a "buddy" system by sharing your schedule with parents, roommate and close friends. Advise your roommate or leave a timed and dated note if you intend to change your normal schedule, particularly if you will not be returning in the evening. Give a network list of telephone numbers to your parents, academic advisor and friends.
5. Travel in groups or use a shuttle service after daylight hours. Avoid short-cuts and walking alone.
6. Do not loan your dormitory key or access card to anyone. Promptly have locks changed or reprogrammed if your key or access card is lost or stolen. Always keep doors and windows locked.
7. Never leave your valuable possessions (e.g., identification, wallets, checks, jewelry, credit cards) in open view.
8. If your telephone has a speed dialer, program it with emergency numbers that include family and close friends.
9. Learn basic escape techniques and occasionally practice them to maintain proficiency.
10. Promptly report suspicious activities or unlawful conduct.
11. If you intend to live off-campus, carefully evaluate facilities and ensure that they meet your minimum safety standards. Do you feel comfortable in the building, with the neighbors and in the neighborhood? Is the building well maintained? Is the building owner or manager responsive to questions and needs?

We Thought That Tragedies Like This Only Happen To Other People.

On March 2, 1998, we received a telephone call that changed our lives forever. We were informed that our daughter Suzanne was missing from the State University of New York at Albany. Our reaction was one of disbelief and shock, leaving us confused and unable to think clearly. We know our daughter well and we were positive that she had not run away. Reluctantly, we faced the realization that we would not wake from this "bad dream." Life would not return to normal. We began to accept the unthinkable, that harm had come to her.

But how could this happen? We thought that missing people were those who took undue risks by using street drugs or by hitchhiking, not to a wholesome, responsible young lady like our daughter. How wrong we were. We were not prepared for this catastrophic event. How could we be?

We were very fortunate to have the help and cooperation of the University Police Department. They began looking for Suzanne immediately and reported her disappearance to local police departments without delay. However, all too often disappearances are not viewed as serious events. As a result, valuable time is lost.

Every parent must have confidence that they will be notified without delay if their child is unaccounted for. No one should be told that a waiting period must pass before an investigation can be initiated.

In our case, as time passed in the investigation we became aware that there were many needs that the police could not easily address. They had their hands full just handling the investigation. Questions and concerns included dealing with media and getting posters distributed. We needed the help of someone who could listen, advise, guide, and refer us to other services. By searching and by chance, we found many experts in the community who have and continue to help us along the way.

This brochure offers specific information about staying safe and about available resources.

This information is intended to instill a sense of caution, not a sense of fear.

Douglas and Mary Lyall

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The NYS Missing and Exploited Children Clearinghouse (MECC).

MECC is a strong partner with parents and law enforcement in preventing and investigating child abduction and exploitation. Responsibilities also include assisting with searches for missing college students.

✓ **The 1-800-FIND-KID hotline** is maintained 365 days a year, 24 hours a day. Missing person leads and sightings received on the hotline are immediately disseminated to investigating law enforcement agencies.

✓ **The DCJS statewide missing and unidentified person repository** is continually updated by MECC with information submitted by law enforcement agencies.

✓ **Investigative assistance** is provided to law enforcement agencies and parents. MECC trains law enforcement officers in basic and advanced investigative techniques.

✓ **Missing person flyers** are developed and distributed to all law enforcement agencies and other entities statewide. Also, the **TRAK (Technology to Recover Abducted Kids)** program allows for rapid dissemination of high-quality photo images and biographical information. When a person is deemed to be "endangered", information can be sent via broadcast fax to virtually every law enforcement agency in the State in a matter of minutes.

✓ Missing person photographs and biographical information are placed on the Internet via the DCJS web site at <http://criminaljustice.state.ny.us>.

✓ **Abduction prevention efforts** include developing and distributing safety literature and programs. Safety information is also available on the DCJS web site.

✓ **MECC collaboration** with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), other state clearinghouses, other State agencies, non-profit organizations, law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and courts can provide nationwide assistance to law enforcement agencies and family members.

CAMPUS SAFETY...



ARE YOU CONCERNED?



State of New York
George E. Pataki, Governor

**NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services
4 Tower Place
Albany, NY 12203**

**1-800-FIND-KID or (518) 457-6326
<http://criminaljustice.state.ny.us>**