WHEN A SCHOOL BECOMES A CRIME SCENE
Guidelines from LAUSD School Police

The goals of law enforcement personnel are to stop criminal acts, to apprehend suspects, to assist victims and to collect and preserve evidence. When a criminal act occurs or is suspected on a school campus or immediately outside the perimeter of a campus, police may designate all or a portion of the campus as a "crime scene" from which evidence must be sought, gathered and properly stored for further use during an investigation or a legal proceeding.

School administrators and staff should not enter a marked or otherwise identified crime scene area or interfere with a police investigation. Likewise, students, parents and community members must not be allowed to enter, interfere with or "contaminate" a crime scene. **Persons not authorized to be within an identified crime scene are themselves subject to arrest.**

1. Law enforcement personnel will establish a "crime scene" under the following conditions:
   - Murder or suicide*.
   - Death due to suspicious circumstances.
   - When the victim of a crime may possibly die.
   - For serious crimes with or without injuries to students, staff or others (crimes including but not limited to vandalism, burglary, arson).

2. **Only** authorized law enforcement and fire department personnel are allowed inside a designated crime scene area.

3. The first police officer(s) to arrive on scene will have specific duties to perform to ensure the protection of the crime scene and to make sure that the crime is investigated properly. If officers seem impatient or abrupt toward staff, it is likely due to their attention to these necessary tasks. Despite the sometimes chaotic nature that characterizes many crises, the police must be permitted to do their jobs according to established procedures.

4. A sergeant and/or police officer will serve as the liaison with the school's administration.

5. Depending on the size and the nature of the crime scene, **the law enforcement officer in charge will determine if and when crisis team members or other support personnel from outside the school can enter the campus** to begin their intervention assessments and follow-up activities. It would thus be useful for school site administrators to identify **in advance** one or two adjacent locations that could be used on a temporary basis by other crisis team and support personnel to check in and establish contact with school site staff until access to the campus is allowed.
6. School administrators may be asked to provide one or more on-campus locations to isolate witnesses for questioning by law enforcement personnel. Keeping witnesses apart helps to preserve the integrity, clarity and objectivity of each person's account.

*Note: Death notifications to next-of-kin is the responsibility of law enforcement personnel.*