

“Incidents and Accidents: How Are Schools Implementing the Safety Regulations Prescribed by the South African Schools Act”?

Eric Eberlein^{1*} and Melanie Moen²

*¹Faculty of Education, Education Management and Policy Studies,
University of Pretoria, South Africa*

Telephone: + 27 12 4205552, Fax: +27 124205595, E-mail: eric.eberlein@up.ac.za

²Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria, South Africa

Telephone: + 27 12 4205632, Fax: + 12 420 5595, E-mail: melanie.moen@up.ac.za

KEYWORDS Children’s Rights. Injuries. Liability. Safety Management. School Safety

ABSTRACT Children are placed in the care of educators on a daily basis. Accidents and incidents occur despite the best efforts of schools to ensure the safety of children and educators. This study investigated how prepared schools are to keep children and educators safe and also ways of improving school safety. The study was carried out at four urban public schools in South Africa. Interviews, non-participant observations and document analysis were used to investigate the phenomenon. The study indicated, that legislation was not adequately implemented. The main barrier to proper implementation of the Act related to access control and preparedness for searches, child supervision and discipline, preparedness for emergencies, South African Police Services and community relations, school safety policy suitability and implementation, hazards on the schools’ premises, understanding the concepts of liability and a lack of Departmental support and staff training. Comprehensive safety training is recommended to improve school safety.