

**SAFETY PROCEDURES AND PREPAREDNESS IN SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN KENYA: A CASE OF TURKANA DISTRICT**

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ABSTRACT

Safety for students and staff from hazards that can be created by unsafe conditions, behavior, disasters or emergencies in schools in Turkana District cannot be guaranteed. This is because of inadequate preparedness and awareness programs for safety needs. This study investigated the adequacy of procedures, precautions and infrastructure to respond to fire outbreaks and destructive violence with a view to making recommendations for improving safety conditions in schools. The specific objectives of this study were: to determine the level of awareness of school safety needs and establish the extent to which school management, teachers and students were prepared to respond to fire outbreak and destructive violence; to find out what precautions have been taken towards school safety in Turkana District; to determine the extent to which schools' environmental and architectural designs enhance school safety.

Primary data were collected from a sample of 210 respondents who were drawn from seven secondary schools in the study area. They included students, head teachers, teachers, non-teaching staff, community members, and key informants. Observation method was used to complement the interviews. Secondary data were collected from both published and unpublished literature such as books, journals, reports, district development plans, magazines and newspapers. The data collected were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) programme.

The major findings from this study were: there were no awareness programs of school safety needs in Turkana District; teachers and students were poorly prepared to respond to fire outbreak and destructive violence; schools in the district strongly relied on reactive prohibitory policies and legislation to curb violence most of which were placed under 'no pardon' category; schools' environmental and architectural designs do not adequately enhance school safety.

Based on these findings, the study recommends that: Schools conduct fire drills and talks periodically in order to improve the level of awareness on school safety needs; schools should conduct training of staff and students on how to prevent violence in order to improve preparedness; schools should not over depend on reactive policies and legislation at the expense of pro-active programs that seek to involve other stakeholders like community in management of students' discipline; and schools should take into account issues of safety when designing environmental and architectural designs. Further research should focus on: training needs assessment for members of staff; integration of appropriate curriculum on school safety.