

Ideas on how to create a safe school

Creating a safe place where children can learn and grow depends on a partnership among students, parents, teachers, and other community institutions to prevent school violence.

Here are some practical suggestions for young people, parents, school staff and others in the community.

Students

- Settle arguments with words, not fists or weapons. If you don't know how, learn how.
- Don't carry guns, knives, or other weapons to school.
- Report crimes or suspicious activities to the police, school authorities, or parents.
- Tell a school official immediately if you see another student with a gun, knife, or other weapon.
- Tell a teacher, parent or trusted adult if you're worried about a bully, threats or violence by another student.
- Learn safe routes for traveling to and from school and stick to them. Know good places to seek help.
- Don't use alcohol or other drugs, and stay away from places and people associated with them.
- Get involved in your school's anti-violence activities—have poster contests against violence, hold anti-drug rallies, volunteer to counsel peers. If there isn't a program at your school, help start one.

Parents

- Sharpen your parenting skills. Emphasize and build on your children's strengths.
- Teach your children how to reduce their risks of becoming crime victims.
- Know where your kids are, what they are doing, and who they are with at all times. Set clear rules in

advance about acceptable activities.

- Ask your children about what goes on during the school day. Listen to what they say and take their concerns and worries seriously.
- Help your children learn nonviolent ways to handle frustration, anger, and conflict.
- Do not allow your child to carry guns, knives, or other weapons.
- Become involved in your child's school activities, – PTA, field trips, and help out in class or the lunch room.
- Work with other parents in your neighborhood to start a block parent program.

School Staff

- Evaluate your school's safety objectively. Set targets for improvement. Be honest about crime problems and work toward bettering the situation.
- Develop consistent disciplinary policies, good security procedures, and response plans for emergencies.
- Train school personnel in conflict resolution, problem solving, drug prevention, crisis intervention cultural sensitivity, classroom management, and counseling skills.
- Make sure they can recognize trouble signs and identify potentially violent students.
- Encourage students to talk about concerns about what's going on in their school, home, and neigh-

borhood. Listen carefully to what they say.

- If a student makes a threat of violence, take him or her seriously. Address the problem immediately and act to prevent a potential conflict.
- When something violent and frightening happens at school or in the neighborhood, take time to talk about it. Discuss the consequences and get students to think about what other choices besides violence might have been available. Get help from trained counselors if necessary.
- Work with students, parents, law enforcement, local government, and community-based groups to develop wider-scope crime prevention efforts.

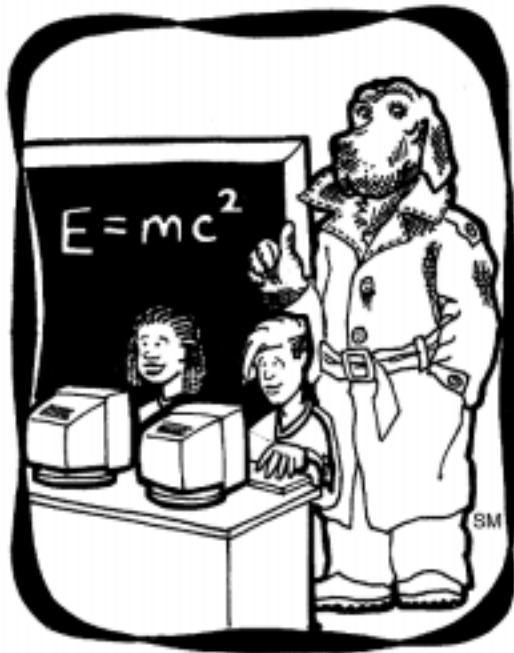
Community Partners

- Law enforcement can report on the type of crimes in the surrounding community and suggest ways to make schools safer.
- Have police or organized groups of adults patrol routes students take to and from school.
- Community-based groups, church organizations, and other service groups can provide counseling, extended learning programs, before- and after-school activities, and other community crime prevention programs.
- State and local governments can develop model school safety plans and provide funding for schools to implement the programs.
- Local businesses can provide apprenticeship programs, participate in adopt-a-school programs, or serve as mentors to area students.
- Colleges and universities can offer conflict management courses to teachers or assist school officials in implementing violence prevention curricula.

When crime drugs and violence spill over from the streets into the schools, providing a safe learning environment becomes increasingly difficult. More students carry weapons for protection. Gunfights replace fistfights.

Many students must travel through gang turf or groups of drug dealers. Violence becomes an acceptable way to settle conflicts.

When this happens, children cannot learn and teachers cannot teach.



National Resources

National Association of Elementary School Principals
1615 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-3483
703-684-3345
www.naesp.org

National School Boards Association
1680 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-838-6722

National School Safety Center
4165 Thousand Oaks Boulevard, Suite 290
Westlake Village, CA 91362
805-373-9977
www.nsscl.org

Consider establishing a McGruff House – a reliable source of help for children in emergency or frightening situations. For information call 801-486-8768.



New York State Police
Division Headquarters
Building 22, 1220 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12226-2252
www.troopers.ny.gov



National Crime Prevention Council
1700 K. Street, NW, Second Floor
Washington, DC 20006-3817
www.weprevent.org

BJA The National Citizen's Crime Prevention Campaign, sponsored by NCPC, is substantially funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

ADT Distribution made possible in part by a grant from ADT Security Systems, Inc.

Students, Parents, School Staff, Community Partners and Law Enforcement

Working Together to Create Safer Schools

