SchoolSafety.gov

FEDERAL AND STATE RESOURCES, GUIDANCE, AND TOOLS TO CREATE SAFER SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

Introduction

SchoolSafety.gov is a collaborative, interagency website created by the Federal government to provide schools and districts with actionable recommendations to create a safe and supportive learning environment where students can thrive and grow. The site serves as a one-stop access point for the American public and school communities to find information, resources, guidance, and best practices on a range of school safety topics and threats. Through the site, members of the **kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) academic community** can also utilize specific tools to prioritize school safety actions, find applicable resources, connect with state-specific and local school safety officials, and develop school safety plans.

SchoolSafety.gov is the public-facing vehicle of the Federal School Safety Clearinghouse, an **interagency effort** among the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, and Justice. The Clearinghouse serves as an ongoing and coordinated effort that includes regular interagency review of content and recommended best practices to keep schools safe, as well as the curation and distribution of resources, guidance, and tools for school communities across the country.

School Safety Topics

On SchoolSafety.gov, the K-12 community can find the latest Federal government resources, guidance, and tools on a range of topics related to school safety, including:

- Bullying and Cyberbullying
- Cybersecurity
- Emergency Planning
- Infectious Diseases and Public Health
- Mental Health
- School Climate
- Targeted Violence
- Threat Assessment and Reporting

Actionable Features and Tools

Specific resources and tools available on SchoolSafety.gov include:

Grants Finder Tool
Helps members of the K-12 school community more easily find, apply for, and ultimately receive school safety-related Federal funding
Link: https://www.schoolsafety.gov/grants-finder-tool

Safety Readiness Tool
Assists users in evaluating their respective school's safety posture across ten elements and provides a tailored Action Plan with options for consideration, aligned resources, and grant opportunities specific to their individual school's needs
Link: https://www.schoolsafety.gov/safety-readiness-tool

State Information Sharing Tool
Enables schools to locate and access state-specific school safety resources, programs, contacts, and opportunities
Link: https://www.schoolsafety.gov/state-search-tool

Resource Library
Provides actionable resources, guidance, training, and fact sheets from the four Clearinghouse agencies to help schools create and maintain a safe learning environment
Link: https://www.schoolsafety.gov/find-school-safety-resources

Calendar of Events
Features upcoming webinars, training sessions, and conferences for school safety personnel, administrators, educators, and parents
Link: https://www.schoolsafety.gov/events

Informational Webinar Series
Addresses emerging school safety topics, threats, and risks, and provides information on related Federal government resources, tools, and best practices
Link: https://www.schoolsafety.gov/events

Monthly School Safety Community Bulletin
Delivers regular updates on the latest school safety-related news, events, opportunities, and resources
Link: https://bit.ly/2XeJdAO

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Create a Safe Learning Environment for the New School Year.

With the start of a new school year underway, the safety and security of students, teachers, and staff remains top of mind for schools and districts across the country. For the kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) community, school safety encompasses measures and systems ranging from mental health support, threat assessment and reporting, and fostering a positive school climate. Integrating these various components and elements of school safety helps school communities better address the range of threats and hazards they may face, while maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment for students to thrive and grow.

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Key school safety elements and topics for schools to consider this year include:

- **Bullying and Cyberbullying:** Bullying and cyberbullying threatens students' physical and emotional safety and can impact their social and academic success at school. Adopting policies to help prevent bullying and cyberbullying and monitoring student behavior in school and online can help schools identify at-risk behaviors and provide interventions before they create safety issues.

- **Mental Health:** Students often come to school with complex physical and mental health concerns or social service needs. Access to mental health services helps to create a positive school climate, prevents worsening of mental health conditions, and leads to better outcomes for students.

- **Threat Assessment and Reporting:** The development and implementation of a threat assessment and reporting program remains a critical component of any school's violence prevention efforts. Establishing a reporting system that is continually monitored and allows for anonymous reporting, as well as having a threat assessment program, or a multidisciplinary group process, to evaluate these reports and respond to threats can significantly reduce acts of violence on school campuses.

- **School Climate:** School climate refers to the quality of school life. Developing students with strong character who are connected to their peers, educators, and communities in meaningful ways can improve school climate and prevent violence from occurring.

- **Emergency Planning:** Families and communities expect schools to keep their children safe from a range of threats and hazards, including targeted violence, natural disasters, and accidents. Emergencies can happen at any time, and schools should have a plan in place to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergency events.

- **Physical Security:** Physical security measures can mitigate external threats and reduce the amount of harm inflicted if incidents occur. Conducting a site assessment and developing building security plans can identify existing vulnerabilities and enhance overall school security.

- **COVID-19:** Schools play an important role in preventing the introduction and spread of COVID-19. Following the latest guidance from the Federal government offers school communities ways to protect students and staff while maintaining operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Create a Safer School Environment by Addressing Bullying and Cyberbullying.

While there are a number of reasons behind school violence, bullying and/or cyberbullying can play a contributing role in some cases. Bullying is widespread in the United States, and the behavior can threaten students' physical and emotional safety as well as impact their social and academic success at school.

Educators, school staff, and parents can help students prevent bullying by talking about it, building a safe school environment, and creating a community-wide bullying prevention strategy. Districts and schools should also adopt school climate initiatives and support for digital citizenship and positive character development, as well as procedures for monitoring student behavior in school and online to identify at-risk behaviors and provide interventions before they create safety issues.

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Resources

SchoolSafety.gov offers resources, programs, and tools school communities can use to establish and maintain bullying and prevention strategies in the classroom, on school grounds, and online.

Bullying

- StopBullying.gov: This interagency website provides information and resources on bullying, cyberbullying, prevention, and response.

- Preventing Bullying: This webpage provides background information on bullying, including bullying statistics in the United States, as well as prevention strategies to stop bullying before it starts.

- KnowBullying Mobile App: Through this app, parents, caregivers, and educators can find information to start conversations with children, share successful bullying prevention strategies, recognize the signs of bullying, and support children who are being bullied.

- Assessing Capacity for Bullying Prevention and Implementing Change: This evidence-informed and evidence-based resource package provides professionals working to prevent bullying with tools to assess their environment's current capacity to address bullying and to determine where there may be gaps and needs.

- The Relationship Between Bullying and Suicide: What We Know and What it Means for Schools: This resource provides school administrators, teachers, and other school staff with concrete, action-oriented information based on the latest science to help improve schools' understanding of and ability to prevent and respond to bullying.

- Measuring Bullying Victimization, Perpetration, and Bystander Experiences: A Compendium of Assessment Tools: This compendium provides the school community with tools to measure a range of bullying experiences, including assessing self-reported incidents and the prevalence of bullying.

Cyberbullying

- Cyber Safety Considerations for K-12 Schools and School Districts: This fact sheet provides guidance to educators, administrators, parents, and law enforcement officials on various online threats to students, including cyberbullying.

- Cyberbullying in Schools: Meta-Analysis Finds That Tailored Programming Protects Students: This report synthesizes findings from Federal research done on school programs specifically designed to prevent or curb cyberbullying.

- Dealing with Cyberbullies: These tips and recommendations outline what cyberbullying is, why it has become a problem, and how to protect students.

- Tips for Teachers: This webpage provides information for teachers, school personnel, and staff to identify warning signs a child is being cyberbullied or is cyberbullying, as well as strategies to prevent and address it.

Sustaining safe in–person learning, ensuring proper hygiene, and managing daily operations are all important for creating and maintaining a safe and secure school environment amid a public health crisis.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) encourages kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) schools to implement layered prevention strategies – multiple strategies for prevention that are used together consistently – to protect students, teachers, staff, visitors, and household members and support in-person learning throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes key strategies like indoor masking, physical distancing, and vaccinations to help combat the spread of COVID-19 in the school community. Schools should work with local public health officials, consistent with applicable laws and regulations, to determine which prevention strategies are needed in their area by monitoring levels of community transmission and local vaccine coverage and adopting screening testing to detect cases in K-12 communities.

In addition to sustaining safe in-person learning and implementing COVID-19 prevention strategies, schools must consider the mental health impact the pandemic has had on students, educators, and staff. Schools should provide the proper resources and support necessary in order to maintain a strong, resilient, and supportive environment as students, teachers, and faculty continue to navigate the ongoing effects of COVID-19.

*School communities should frequent CDC's official website as well as follow the policies and practices of state, local, territorial, and tribal public health departments as COVID-19 guidance is updated and subject to change as the pandemic evolves.

Resources

SchoolSafety.gov offers resources, tools, and guidance related to COVID-19 prevention and mental health support in K-12 schools, including:

- Back to School During COVID-19: These resources, compiled by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, are designed to address mental health and resiliency in school settings as students and schools cope with the pandemic.

- COVID-19 Vaccines for Children and Teens: This guidance outlines information on COVID-19 vaccines for children and teens, including how to find vaccination spots and tips to support youth before, during, and after vaccination.

- Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools: This frequently updated guidance for school administrators outlines strategies for K-12 schools to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 and maintain safe operations.

- Responding to COVID-19 School Mental Health: This compilation of resources, products, events, and training helps to address the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on students and their families, educators, and the school mental health workforce, as well as the school mental health system.

- Safe Schools Checklist: This resource provides ideas on how to get school communities vaccinated and maintain safe, in-person learning all year long.

- Toolkit for Responding to COVID-19 Cases: CDC's toolkit for K-12 school administrators includes a guide for addressing cases in schools, case and contact notification letter templates, and more.

- What You Should Know About COVID-19 Testing in Schools: This resource offers information on options, strategies, and considerations for COVID-19 testing in K-12 schools, including the Test to Stay option.

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Be #CyberSmart. Defend Against Cybersecurity Threats to Your School.

Across America, kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) educational institutions are experiencing a significant increase in cyberattacks, especially during the transition to remote and virtual learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Malicious cyber actors are targeting school computer systems, slowing access, and rendering the systems inaccessible to basic functions.

Our Nation's students are also spending more time online than ever before, using technology to complete homework, communicate with peers, and engage with teachers and school staff. Our growing dependence on technology systems - coupled with emerging, evolving, and increasingly deceptive cyber threats - demands enhanced awareness and vigilance when it comes to our online world. It is important for schools, parents, and students to stay safe online by taking proactive steps to defend against risks and strengthen cyber safety and security both at home and within schools.

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Resources

SchoolSafety.gov offers resources, programs, and tools school communities can use to prevent, respond to, and if needed, recover from cybersecurity threats and cyberattacks.

General Cybersecurity Resources

- Cyber Threats to K-12 Remote Learning Education: This fact sheet is a primer for non-technical educational professionals, and includes general cybersecurity best practices, video-conferencing best practices, and a list of available resources.

- Cyber Safety Considerations for K-12 Schools and School Districts: This fact sheet provides information to students, teachers, and administrators on identifying cyber threats, educating students on responsible online behavior, and learning how to prevent, prepare for, and respond to a potential cybersecurity incident.

- Cyber Safety Series: This series of short videos – centered around themes such as social media safety, ransomware, phishing, and making strong passwords – outlines tips and best practices to help schools, students, and educators stay safe online.

- Stop.Think.Connect. Parent and Educator Resources: These resources cover information on how to talk to your children and students about the importance of internet safety.

- Keeping Children Safe Online: This website offers guidance for teachers, parents, guardians, and caregivers on protecting children from becoming victims of online exploitation.

- Understanding Patches and Software Updates: This resource defines patches (software and operating system updates) and outlines best practices for software updates.

Ransomware and Phishing Resources

- StopRansomware.gov: This website is a one-stop resource where public and private sector entities can find U.S. government tools, information, and resources to help reduce the risk of ransomware attacks and improve resilience. The site includes a specific K-12 resource section, which includes information geared towards IT staff, students, parents, and administrators.

- Cyber Actors Target K-12 Distance Learning Education: This joint advisory details the threat of ransomware attacks, the theft of data, and the disruption of distance learning services to K-12 educational institutions.

- Protecting Sensitive and Personal Information: This fact sheet provides information for organizations to use in preventing and responding to ransomware-caused data breaches.

- Phishing (General Security Postcard): This postcard explains phishing and provides signs and tips to prevent attacks.

- Cyber Security Evaluation Tool - Ransomware Readiness Assessment (RRA): This tool is a stand-alone desktop application that guides asset owners and operators through a systematic process of evaluating Operational Technology and Information Technology. The RRA module is a self-assessment based on a tiered set of practices to help organizations better assess how well they are equipped to defend against and recover from a ransomware incident.

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Emergency Planning Resources

Plan for emergencies and know how to respond.

Each school day, our Nation's schools are entrusted to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for approximately 56 million primary and secondary students. Families and communities expect schools to keep their children safe from a range of threats and hazards, including targeted violence, natural disasters, and accidents. Emergencies can happen at any time, and schools should have a plan in place to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergency events.

A key component of emergency planning is the creation of an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) that describes the actions schools should take before, during, and after incidents. By having plans in place to keep students and staff safe, schools play a key role in taking preventative and protective measures to stop an emergency from occurring or reducing the impact of an incident.

Strategies to Consider

Develop a comprehensive EOP.
Address what happens before, during, and after an incident.

Form a planning team.
Include a wide range of school personnel such as administrators, teachers, school psychologists, and community partners.

Establish a regular review period.
Review, evaluate, and update the school EOP at least every two years.

Provide regular training.
Facilitate training on the school EOP for staff and students.

Resources

SchoolSafety.gov offers resources, tools, and products schools and districts can use to support the implementation of emergency planning initiatives. Resources also highlight ways schools can incorporate mental health supports in their emergency planning efforts to ensure the mental health needs of students and staff are met before, during, and after an emergency.

- Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans (School Guide): This interagency guidance provides information to school administrators on emergency management planning, and includes a process for developing, implementing, and refining a school EOP with community partners.

- The Role of Districts in Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans: Developed to serve as a complement to the School Guide, this report recommends specific roles and responsibilities for district-level administrators and staff in the emergency planning process.

- Sample School Emergency Operations Plan: This document presents excerpts from a sample school EOP and is intended to be used for training purposes.

- EOP Interactive Tools: The Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center offers a suite of emergency management planning tools for school administrators, law enforcement, and state officials.

- K-12 Exercise Starter Kits: These self-conducted tabletop exercises are tailored for the academic community and include a set of scalable tools aimed to test existing emergency plans, protocols, and procedures.

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We can make schools safer by improving access to mental health services.

By supporting kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) students experiencing mental health challenges, schools can help foster a sense of safety and promote better academic and behavioral outcomes. Access to mental health services helps reduce mental, emotional and behavioral difficulties with students at risk. Public health emergencies such as COVID-19 have a significant impact on students and their families, educators and the school mental health workforce. Addressing the mental health needs of our school communities has become more important and necessary than ever before.

Facts and Figures

1 out of 5 children living in the United States experience a **mental disorder** in a given year. [1]

7.1% of children aged 3-17 years (approximately 4.4 million) have **diagnosed anxiety.** [2]

Ages 6–11
Behavior problems are more common among children aged 6–11 years than children younger or older. [2]

1 in 6 U.S. children aged 2–8 years had a diagnosed mental, behavioral or developmental disorder. [2]

Sources: [1] National Research Council and Institute of Medicine Report [2] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Resources

SchoolSafety.gov is home to mental health resources and strategies schools can use to help implement school-based mental health support in their communities. Take the first steps to creating a safer school environment with these helpful resources.

- School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation System – National Center for School Mental Health

- National School Mental Health Best Practices: Implementation Guidance Modules – Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network Coordinating Office and National Center for School Mental Health

- Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- Responding to COVID-19 School Mental Health – Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

- Guidance to States and School Systems on Addressing Mental Health and Substance Use Issues in Schools - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

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The Department of Homeland Security's Office of Intelligence and Analysis and the Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships believe that the threat of targeted violence in schools will remain as more children return to school full-time. Recently, the Surgeon General warned of an increasing youth mental health crisis, as educators, teachers, students, and schools work to mitigate the impacts of prolonged social isolation, loss of social connection, financial hardships, and other potential risk factors that may make an individual more susceptible to radicalization to violence.

Individuals who engage in targeted violence can be affected by a range of online elements and in some cases, online activity can lead to physical violence. Current harms in the digital space, including risks to privacy, security, cyberbullying, and hate speech, cannot be overlooked.

Schools, educators, and parents can help build resilience against online hate and violence, as well as foster digital ecosystems that are safe and secure for students. Through promoting online safety practices, improving digital literacy and critical thinking skills, and enhancing cybersecurity and technology systems, the kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) community can help reduce certain risk factors among youth.

Resources

SchoolSafety.gov offers a variety of resources, programs, and tools that school communities can use to bolster and enhance student online safety, including:
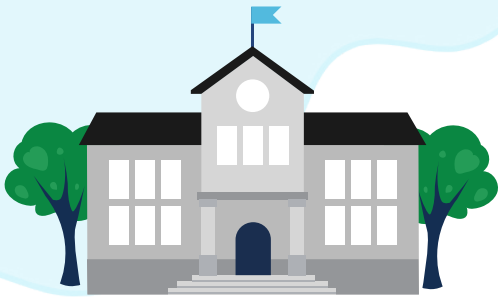
- Bug Bytes: This graphic novel communicates the dangers and risks associated with threat actors using social media and other communication platforms to spread mis-, dis-, and malinformation (MDM).

- Cyber Safety Considerations for K-12 Schools and School Districts: This fact sheet includes information on the most common online threats students face, including cyberbullying, and describes how school and school district administrators can prepare and respond to online threats.

- Cyber Safety Video Series: This series of videos and accompanying fact sheets highlights common potential threats students and K-12 schools are likely to face online, as well as proactive steps individuals and institutions can take to stay safe.

- Electronic Media and Youth Violence: A CDC Issue Brief for Educators and Caregivers: This report educates the general public on the phenomena of electronic aggression, which is defined as any kind of aggression perpetrated through technology, and its role in public health, including among the school community.

- Preventing Violent Extremism in Schools: This guide serves to educate school personnel about at-risk behaviors and activities that assist students with reducing social and psychological commitment to violence as a method of resolving a grievance.

- StopBullying.gov: This website contains resources for youth, parents, schools, and others to better understand bullying and cyberbullying, including the warning signs, those particularly at risk, and prevention tips.

- Technology and Youth: Protecting Your Child from Electronic Aggression: This tip sheet provides a general overview on what comprises electronic aggression, and what parents and caregivers can do to address and help prevent it.

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Schools can work to prepare for potential acts of violence and other threats by improving their campuses' physical security and involving school personnel who are trained to prevent, recognize, and respond to threats of violence, as well as implementing other prevention strategies.

While there is not a universal plan for every school's unique needs, implementing physical security measures can mitigate threats at schools and reduce the amount of harm inflicted if incidents occur. Proactive measures include conducting regular site assessments and developing building security plans to identify existing vulnerabilities and enhance overall school security.

Additionally, schools should prioritize information sharing between stakeholders and community partners to help build in best practices around the security and resilience of physical spaces.

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Resources

SchoolSafety.gov offers resources, programs, and tools school communities can use to improve their physical security.

- SITE ASSESS: This free, secure mobile app designed specifically for education agencies allows personnel to walk around buildings and grounds and examine their safety, security, accessibility, and emergency preparedness. It generates a customized to-do list that may be used to address facility improvements, prompts teams to share pertinent information with first responders, and contains relevant resources on several education facility and preparedness topics.

- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) School Assessment (CSA): CPTED is an approach that focuses on improving the design of the built environment to help reduce opportunities for disputes and violence and promote positive behavior. The CSA is a tool that assesses the use of CPTED principles in three areas of schools: grounds, buildings, and interiors.

- Campus Resilience Program: K-12 Active Shooter Exercise Starter Kits: This tool helps K-12 school communities self-conduct a tabletop exercise and reinforces a school's specific emergency plans, protocols, and procedures, while also testing and strengthening its preparedness, response, and recovery capabilities when responding to an active shooter incident.

- Active Shooter Preparedness: School Security and Resilience: This video provides information geared towards educators, school resource officers, and school administrators who serve in important roles in safeguarding schools.

- Bomb-Making Materials Awareness Program (BMAP): BMAP prevents bad actors from using everyday household products to build bombs. Through engaging videos, posters, and other materials, BMAP educates people on how to recognize and report suspicious bomb-making activity to keep communities safe across the country.

- Free Bomb Prevention Trainings: CISA's Office for Bombing Prevention (OBP) training programs have equipped over 140,000 participants in more than 100 major U.S. cities with the tools they need to prevent, protect against, respond to, and mitigate bombing incidents. Take a free, online training at https://cdp.dhs.gov/obp to learn how to protect your institution against improvised explosive devices, or find out about OBP trainings by emailing OBPTraining@cisa.dhs.gov or visiting www.cisa.gov/bombing-prevention-training.

- The Design of Safe, Secure, and Welcoming Learning Environments: This report follows a summit that brought together architects, policymakers, students, educators, school administrators, law enforcement and building code officials, mental health experts, and others to examine violence in schools and explore ways to holistically improve safety and security in our school communities.

School climate is a broad, multifaceted concept that involves many aspects of the student's educational experience.

While the circumstances that lead to violence are complex and far-ranging, research suggests that a positive school climate can lead to a significant decrease in the likelihood of crime, aggression, and violent behavior. Developing students with strong character who are connected to their peers, educators, and communities in meaningful ways can improve school climate, help prevent acts of violence, and lead to improved behavioral and academic outcomes.

School leaders and teachers can make character development a priority by supporting practices in the classroom and school, as well as collaborating with families and community organizations. Schools and districts should also implement social, emotional, and behavioral support systems to create a climate that supports and responds to student behavior. By engaging in a school climate improvement process, education leaders at the state, district, and school levels can increase the safety and success of all members of the school community.

Strategies to Consider

Conduct a school climate survey and collect data: Measuring school climate is critical for improvement because high-quality data allows schools and districts to better understand the perceptions of its students, staff, and parents; monitor progress; make data-driven decisions; involve stakeholders; and adapt to shifting needs related to school climate.

Identify measures and programs that are best suited for your school and implement them: Once schools have identified areas of school climate and conditions for learning that need to be addressed, they must apply their data to make an informed decision about which programmatic interventions should be implemented to improve student outcomes. Implementation involves putting a plan into effect, including the process of monitoring progress, making adjustments, and evaluating impact.

Consider expanding beyond school climate to incorporate social and emotional learning (SEL) and provide students access to treatment programs or professionals: Social and emotional learning involves the processes through which children acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. A growing body of research indicates that school-based efforts to promote students' SEL represent an effective approach to enhance children's success in school and life.

Resources

SchoolSafety.gov offers a variety of resources, programs, and tools that school communities can use to foster a positive school climate, including:

Guides and Reports

- Creating and Sustaining a Positive and Communal School Climate: This report provides four recommendations to parents, administrators, and principals for creating and sustaining a positive and communal school environment.

- Parent & Educator Guide to School Climate Resources: This guide provides parents, teachers, administrators, and other interested parties general information about the concept of school climate improvement, suggestions for leading an effective school climate improvement effort, and additional resources for those interested in more information.

Resources and Tools

- School Climate Improvement Resource Package: This resource package includes a variety of items to meet a range of needs among public schools and districts interested in improving school climate, including a reference manual, action guides, data resources, and online modules.

- School Climate Surveys: These adaptable surveys and associated web-based platform allows states, local districts, and schools to collect and act on reliable, nationally-validated school climate data in real-time.

Strategies and Tips

- Build a Safe Environment: This webpage offers information for schools and teachers on how to create a safe and supportive school climate to help prevent bullying.

- School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth: This webpage contains fact sheets and training materials on strategies for school administrators, teachers, and families on increasing school connectedness – the belief held by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals.

Technical Assistance Centers

- National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments: The Center offers information and technical assistance to states, districts, schools, institutions of higher learning, and communities focused on improving school climate and conditions for learning.

- Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports Technical Assistance Center: The Center helps schools, districts, and states build a multi-tiered approach to social, emotional, and behavioral support that can improve school climate, safety, and academic outcomes for students, including students with disabilities and students from underrepresented groups.

Trainings

- Creating a Safe and Respectful Environment in Our Nation's Classrooms: This training is designed to aid classroom teachers, other educators, and support personnel to reduce instances of bullying behavior and to build a supportive classroom climate in which bullying is less likely to occur.

- Trauma-Sensitive Schools Training Package: This training package offers school and district administrators and staff a framework and roadmap for adopting a trauma-sensitive approach school- or district-wide. It includes a variety of resources for educating school staff about trauma and trauma-sensitive practices and for providing school leaders with a step-by-step process for implementing a universal, trauma-informed approach.

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Threat Assessment and Reporting Resources

Identify and address threatening or concerning behaviors before they lead to violence.

Reporting on a variety of concerning student behaviors and other suspicious activities provides authorities and school personnel with the information they need to stop violence before it occurs. Schools should establish a reporting system that is continually monitored and allows for anonymous reporting. Having a threat assessment program, or a multidisciplinary group process, to evaluate these reports and respond to threats can significantly reduce violence, including mass casualty attacks.

5 Key Strategies

Form a threat assessment team. Start with one or two school administrators, then expand the team to include representation from a variety of disciplines, including teachers, school counselors, law enforcement, and mental health providers.

Provide training to team members. Set up a schedule for the team to meet and train together regularly.

Create a plan. Establish comprehensive written plans and procedures for the threat assessment process.

Communicate with stakeholders. Share information about your school's threat assessment policy with faculty, staff, students, and families.

Assess outcomes. Continually review the results and outcomes associated with reported threats and other concerning behaviors to improve the threat assessment process.

Resources

SchoolSafety.gov is home to resources, strategies, and tools the kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) academic community can reference to support the implementation of threat assessment and reporting initiatives at schools.

- Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model: An Operational Guide for Preventing Targeted School Violence: Guidance from the U.S. Secret Service provides actionable steps schools can take to develop comprehensive targeted violence prevention plans.

- School Safety: Research on Gathering Tips and Addressing Threats: New research suggests that schools should have a systematic and coordinated approach in place to gather and process information on threats, respond appropriately, and document the response.

- Averting Targeted School Violence: A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Plots Against Schools: This recently released U.S. Secret Service report, which examines 67 plots to conduct a school attack that were averted, identifies key findings and commonalities across potential targeted violence incidents.

- Addressing the Risk of Violent Behavior in Youth: Know the Signs of Youth Violence and How to Identify and Reduce Risk in Schools: This 90-minute presentation, produced by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration in partnership with the Department of Education, is designed to help teachers and school personnel identify behaviors and other signs that could result in youth violence.

- REMS TA Center School Behavioral Threat Assessments: An Introduction: This one-day training, offered through the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center, familiarizes schools and school districts with school behavioral threat assessments in preventing and reducing targeted violence at K–12 schools.

- National Threat Evaluation and Reporting Program: The National Threat Evaluation & Reporting (NTER) Program offers a Behavioral Threat Assessment Train-the-Trainer Program. This Master Trainer Program (MTP) certifies federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial homeland security partners in behavioral threat assessment. The MTP teaches candidates to identify and assess risk and warning signs, and manage potential threats of future, targeted violence, regardless of motive. For more information, please email NTER.MTP@hq.dhs.gov.

Youth Violence Prevention Resources

Youth violence is a significant public health problem that affects thousands of young people each day.

During the 2017–18 school year, **80 percent of public schools** recorded that one or more incidents of violence, theft, or other crimes had taken place, amounting to **1.4 million incidents.**

In 2019, students ages 12–18 experienced **764,600 victimizations at school**, translating to a rate of 30 victimizations per 1,000 students at school.

In 2019, **5 percent of students ages 12–18** reported that they had been afraid of attack or harm at school.

Source: Report on Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2020, National Center for Education Statistics

These incidents can have lasting effects on the physical, mental, and social health of young people as well as impact families, schools, and the broader community.

The factors that contribute to youth violence are complex and far-ranging and are often the culmination of months and years of individual experiences. Research shows that prevention efforts by teachers, administrators, parents, community members, and even students can reduce violence and improve the school environment.

Proactive measures to prevent school violence include:

- fostering a positive school climate.
- ensuring access to mental health support.
- addressing bullying and cyberbullying.
- implementing physical safety and security measures at schools.
- promoting family environments that support healthy development.
- creating protective community environments.
- intervening to lessen harms and prevent future risk.

A comprehensive approach that simultaneously targets multiple risk and protective factors is critical to having a broad and continued impact on youth violence.

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Resources

SchoolSafety.gov offers a variety of resources, programs, and tools school communities can use to prevent youth violence, including:

- [Addressing the Risk of Violent Behavior in Youth](#): This presentation helps teachers and school personnel identify common risk factors and warning signs associated with violent behaviors as well as strategies to effectively respond to situations of concern.

- [Averted School Violence (ASV) Database: 2021 Analysis Update](#): The ASV database collects information on school attacks – completed and averted – with the goal of mitigating and preventing future injuries in educational institutions. This report reflects an analysis of 170 averted attacks in the database and concludes that positive school environments that offer violence prevention programs, foster trust among students and staff, provide support to all students, and encourage early intervention are key to averting school attacks.

- [Averting Targeted School Violence: A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Plots Against Schools](#): This report examines 67 recent plots to conduct a school attack that were averted and identifies key findings and commonalities across potential targeted violence incidents.

- [A Comprehensive Technical Package for the Prevention of Youth Violence and Associated Risk Behaviors](#): This technical package represents a select group of strategies based on the best available evidence to help communities and states sharpen their focus on prevention activities with the greatest potential to prevent youth violence and its consequences.

- [Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and School Violence](#): This resource provides an overview of how CPTED, an approach that focuses on improving the design of the built environment to help reduce opportunities for disputes and violence and promote positive behavior, can be incorporated at schools.

- [Mitigating the Threat of School Violence as the U.S. "Returns to Normal" from the COVID-Pandemic and Beyond](#): This bulletin raises awareness of potential risk factors and indicators for targeted violence in schools, raises awareness of the likelihood that students may have been exposed to multiple risk factors during the COVID-19 pandemic, and provides resources to become an engaged bystander as part of a comprehensive local prevention framework.

- [Preventing School Violence](#): This webpage provides information on the issue and prevalence of youth and school violence and provides access to additional resources, technical packages, and articles on violence prevention.

- [Report on Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2020](#): This annual report presents data on crime at schools from the perspectives of students, teachers, principals, and the general population from an array of sources. It covers topics such as victimization, bullying, school conditions, fights, the presence of security staff at school, and student perceptions of personal safety at school.

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