

6 things parents can do to boost school security efforts

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September 26, 2022



A national security expert who collaborates with schools across the country identifies ways to improve campus safety and security--and parents play a vital role

As students head back to the classroom, parents of school-age children can play a significant role in helping assure violence prevention and school security measures are implemented in their child's school.

Parents can be as influential as school board members, superintendents, principals, and teachers in helping prevent violence in schools. In fact, parents—who are also taxpayers and voters—have the power to effect change if they are willing to become involved both individually and collectively.

All members of the education community—including parents—need to be involved in helping provide a safe and secure environment where children can learn without fear. Don't wait until something bad happens.

To help parents become more involved in securing school campuses, here are six school security steps to get started:

1. Talk to your children about school security. Students are very tuned into what happens on their campuses. They know where there are weak spots in the school security plans. Also talk to them about resolving conflicts in a peaceful, nonviolent manner and about immediately reporting to school officials any threatening talk or behavior from other students.

2. Visit your child's campus and talk with administrators about the school security plan. Among other things, find out how visitors can enter the [campus](#). Ask if the exterior doors and classroom doors are regularly locked and monitored throughout the day. Ask about security drills in place at their school, especially Active Shooter or other emergency lockdown procedures. Check to see if the campus has cameras that monitoring entries, hallways, and common areas. Ask how they are stopping weapons from entering their school and if the school has a crisis plan in place for overseeing an armed person on campus. What is the school protocol of notification of parents of any emergencies and where do parents go for reunification? This is very crucial during an emergency. Is there an anonymous tip line for students and parents to report suspicious activities or rumors?

3. Educate yourself on the security plans, procedures and technologies that are working well. Check other schools in your area to see their security protocols.

4. Get to know the law enforcement officials assigned to your child's school. Find out when they are on campus and what their responsibilities include. Their police vehicle should be parked out front and visible. If your child's school does not have a regularly assigned school resource officer (SRO), this is unacceptable, you must work with the school principal, school superintendent and school board to make that happen.

5. Join other parents who may also be concerned about the security of their children. Become involved in the PTA or PTO and start a security committee if one does not already exist. Ask school officials to meet regularly with the group and report on security/safety incidents and continuing plans to keep the campus safe. Be an active participant by asking questions.

6. Do not keep firearms easily accessible in your home. If you have weapons in your home, make sure that they are kept locked and secured. Report a missing or stolen firearm to police immediately. Teach children respect for the devastation that can occur when weapons get into the wrong hands or are used improperly.

School administrators and teachers cannot be expected to solve the problems of school violence alone. Parents have to share the burden. By talking with their children, keeping informed, collaborating with other parents, school administrators and law enforcement officials, parents can play a vital role in keeping their children safe at school.

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