

# Parents and School Safety

## *The “How to” Guide*

Parents have been increasingly encouraged to get involved in the school safety efforts being put forth by their children’s schools. However, what is a parent to do when far too often either it is difficult to know how to be engaged or find time to be involved with your child’s school. Provided below is a quick reference guide to assist parents in gaining knowledge about their child’s school safety and conversation starters to address the issue with their children.

### The 5 K’s of Knowledge All Parents Should Know

- **Know your child’s school-** Be informed about the efforts of your child’s school in establishing and maintaining a safe learning environment. Staying informed will assist you to be a better advocate for your child and provide factual information to your child when concerns arise.
- **Know your child-** Be aware of your child’s typical behavior patterns and be attentive to behavior changes that are atypical for your child and normal adolescent development. This may be a warning sign to something that requires more attention and/or professional help.
- **Know warning signs-** Red flags, as warning signs are often referred to, are signs that signal potential problems. The earlier these warning signs are addressed, the quicker your child may recover. Therefore, it is imperative for parents to actively engaged with their child to more quickly identify warning signs and connect with available resources.
- **Know how to intervene-** Advocate. Parents are a child’s greatest advocates. Being informed on how to speak to your child and access resources in your child’s school or local community is critical.
- **Know how to connect with your child-** Communicate. Every parent-child relationship is unique. Parents must be actively developing a relationship that works for both and allows each to gain understanding and insight. As parents, children take their cues from their parents. Speak to your child about how they think and feel about school safety and address each with appropriate levels of concern and understanding.

## Conversation Starters

- All children need a safe environment in order to learn and grow. How do you feel about the safety in your school or school bus? Are there places in your school that make you feel unsafe?
  - Listen attentively and follow up on concerns expressed by your child with your child's school. Also, inform your child of their school's safety efforts and school resources available to them to communicate concerns.
  
- School safety is everyone's responsibility. If you see inappropriate behaviors (bullying, fighting/assaults, self-harm, etc.) or learn about a potential threat to your school (bringing a gun to school, gang recruitment, etc.) it is your responsibility to tell an adult.
  - Ask your child who they feel comfortable approaching at school to speak with, and inform them of other adults in their school that they may also approach such as guidance counselors, teachers, school resource officers, or available anonymous reporting resources, if their school has one.
  
- Violence is not an acceptable form of solution. Although media and society may encourage it, it is in fact wrong and will only brew more violence.
  - Discuss with your child positive problem solving skills, coping skills and available resources. Let them know you are listening and will also advocate on their behalf