

## Safe and Supportive Schools: Mobilizing Family Stakeholders

Students and educators have the right to attend schools that are safe and conducive to learning and achievement. Yet, schools often experience critical incidents of suicide, natural disasters or mass casualty events that have a devastating impact on entire communities.

It is imperative that students and families are active stakeholders—working in partnership with school officials and local community leaders to create a safe and supportive school environment where students can learn, grow and thrive.

### What steps can you take as a parent, guardian or family member to ensure your child is attending a safe and supportive school?



#### Step 1: Get in the Know

Before you engage on behalf of your child, do your research so you are informed about school safety best practices. The Department of Education's [Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center](#) has a helpful [guide for developing school emergency plans](#).

National PTA has also endorsed the Framework for Safe and Successful Schools which provides evidence-based recommendations for improving school safety. Read the framework and supplemental materials for best practices related to school safety and how to successfully implement these best practices.

- [A Framework for Safe and Successful Schools](#)
- [Policy Recommendations for Implementing the Framework](#)
- [Assessing the Safety of the School Environment Using the Framework](#)
- [Considerations and Action Steps for Implementing the Framework](#)



#### Step 2: Ask Questions

Your child's school may have a school safety plan already in place. If so, it is important that you ask questions to learn about your school's safety plan and provide suggestions for how it could be improved.

If your child's school does not have a school safety plan in place, consider working with school officials to create one. Here are some questions you can ask to get started with evaluating or creating a school safety plan:

- How are students and families involved in the development and evaluation of school safety plans?
- What type of student mental health and wellness support services are available? How are these services communicated to students and families?
- Are there anonymous reporting and response procedures in place for students, staff and families to report concerning behaviors or potential threats?
- In the event of an emergency, how are students evacuated from the school building and how are parents and students reunited?
- In the aftermath of an emergency, what psychological support services are in place to help students cope with the incident?

## Safe and Supportive Schools: A Resource for Parents



### Step 3: Take Action

Once you understand what is happening around school safety in your child's school, it's time to act. Consider doing the following:

#### Host a School Safety Forum

Forums are a great way to gather all stakeholders together to discuss school safety. At a school safety forum, you should communicate safety policies and procedures, hear from school leadership and law enforcement about school safety, and gather feedback and concerns about the school environment, school climate and school safety protocols. Reach out to your school PTA to gather a group of interested parents to participate in a school safety forum.

#### Take Your Seat at the Table

Many schools already have an existing school safety team that develops, implements and evaluates school safety policies and procedures. Ask the school principal how you can join this team to provide the parent perspective on school safety. If your school does not already have a school safety team, work with the school principal, other parents and community leaders to create one!

#### Advocate for Safe and Supportive Schools

Decision-makers care about their constituents' thoughts and recommendations about issues impacting their district. To influence the development of school safety policies, consider meeting with your local, state and federal decisionmakers to communicate what your child's school needs to be a safe and supportive learning environment. Visit our [Advocacy Toolkit](#) for tips on how to conduct a meeting with a decisionmaker. And check out [National PTA's Safe and Supportive Schools position statement](#) to learn more about National PTA's policy priorities related to school safety.



### Connect with National PTA

Stay connected with National PTA on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Subscribe to our [One Voice blog](#) and sign up for our [Advocacy Insider e-newsletter](#) for more advocacy tips and resources.



Check out our companion resource, [Safe and Supportive Schools: 20 Questions Every Parent Should Ask](#), for a full list of questions you can ask to learn about your school's safety plan.