

5 Questions Every Family Should Ask as the School Year Begins

1. Does the school have an active shooter policy?

Every school district should have an active shooter policy that outlines what actions must be taken by the school and its staff members during an active shooter crisis. The policy should contain specific requirements on engagement and coordination with law enforcement, school-wide communication, actions to secure students, training of staff, designation of the “safer” areas in a classroom for concealment, and the necessity to keep this area clear and accessible.

2. Does the school train all staff members for active shooter scenarios?

Every staff member must know their role in locking down a school and ensuring the safety of students in their care during an active shooter incident. This is all-inclusive and involves every member of the staff on campus, including non-educational and substitute teaching staff. There must be clear rules for leadership and secondary coverage in case any staff members are not on campus that day. The staff should be regularly trained, and training should include practice drills with after-action assessments to address areas that need improvement. Any drills conducted when students are involved must be age-appropriate.

3. Does the school have a single point of entry (access control) during school hours?

Every school must control access to the campus and its building throughout the entire school day. Any open gates or doors must be actively attended to prevent unauthorized access. Cameras alone are insufficient as they cannot prevent an assailant from gaining access to the campus. A single point of entry is the recommended security posture for schools as it limits the number of entry points the school must actively monitor.



4. Is there a way students and staff can report threats?

Students and staff are often the first to see the signs that lead to the development of school shooters. Students and staff must have a way to report these initial signs or threats to the school and law enforcement. Students and staff should be able to report the threats anonymously if they choose to do so. Schools and law enforcement must have agreements in place to share information to conduct threat assessments. Finally, reported threats must be taken seriously by the school and law enforcement. There must be clear ownership of who will take the lead in addressing every threat and a clear policy on what actions they must take.

5. How are parents notified when a threat has been made to the school?

The first step to keeping your children safe is to make sure you are aware of the threats your children face. Parents cannot make informed decisions about the safety of their children if your school doesn't share information about threats made against it, its staff, or its students. Schools must have a policy and defined method for sharing information with parents when a threat is made against a school.

MISSION STATEMENT

Stand with Parkland is a national organization representing American families. We are committed to advocating for practical public safety reforms focused on the safety of our children and staff at school, improved mental health support, and responsible firearms ownership. Personal responsibility and a desire for change are paramount to this effort, and it is the people involved at all levels that will make these goals a reality. Violence in our schools affects everyone. It is an American epidemic, and it is time that we all come together to do something about it.

Make your voice heard.

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