



School Safety at a Glance

School safety is an important concern for the more than 49.5 million students and staff in schools across the country. It is fundamental to addressing and preventing youth violence, and fostering positive student well-being, academic achievement, and prosocial behavior.^{1,2,3} However, new information from the CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance (YRBS) data shows that there is an increase in threats to schools, as more students are bringing weapons to school and experiencing cyberbullying and mental health challenges.

Percentage of High School Students in the US Who:	2019(%)	2021(%)
Carried a Gun	4.4	3.5
Brought a Weapon to School	2.8	3.1
Were Threatened/Injured with a Weapon at School	7.4	6.6
Were Bullied at School	19.5	15
Experienced Electronic Bullying (CyberBullying)	15.7	15.9
Were in a Fight at School	8	5.8
Felt Sad or Hopeless	36.7	42.3
Seriously Considered Attempting Suicide	18.8	22
Attempted Suicide	8.9	10.2
Did Not go to School Because They Felt Unsafe	8.7	8.6
Felt Close to People at School (School Connectedness)	**	61

***Data not currently available*

Although the reasons students face these issues may vary, schools should have policies, systems, and environments that support all members of the community to 1) feel welcome, connected, and secure; 2) access equitable supports and services; and 3) build the skills they need for safe and healthy futures.

Creating Safe Schools

Creating safe schools takes a comprehensive and layered approach.^{3,4,5} A plan should be put together by a multidisciplinary team based on the best available evidence-based strategies with input from the school community and evaluated systematically. School safety experts also recommend a combination of the following strategies that fall along the crisis timeline that includes prevention, response, and recovery.

Prevention strategies identify and address risks to school safety before incidents occur to decrease violence. Response strategies address urgent needs to reduce negative effects when violence or crisis does occur. Recovery strategies support returning to operations after an incident and ensuring that longer term community needs are met after violence or crisis occurs.

Prevention strategies have the strongest evidence supporting their implementation and success in reducing violence. Here are some examples of common strategies and their evidence base. Where strategies fall on the crisis timeline is indicated below:



School safety strategies with clear and consistent evidence bases:^{6,7}

- School climate, social-emotional learning, and anti-bullying programs^{8,9} ●
- Threat assessment and related screening programs^{10,11} ●
- Restorative practices/non-exclusionary discipline¹² ●■▲
- Trauma-informed responses and resilience orientation^{13,14} ●■▲
- Non-remedial after-school and youth empowerment programs¹⁵ ●

School safety strategies with developing evidence bases:

- Interpersonal surveillance such as reporting systems¹⁶ ●■
- Active shooter training and other lockdown drills^{17,18} ■
- School Resource Officers (SROs)¹⁹ ●■▲
- Door lock policies, signage, and school-focused Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)²⁰ ■
- Coordination with law enforcement/first responders²¹ ■
- Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs)²² ●

School safety strategies with limited or mixed evidence bases:

- Video cameras, metal detectors, other target hardening measures⁴ ■
- Stop the Bleed/hemorrhage control training ■
- Armed teachers/staff/security personnel (non-SROs) ■
- Technology-aided identification/monitoring⁴ ●■

When putting together a comprehensive plan, it is important to remember that strategies can also influence other strategies. Use the resources below to learn more about each strategy.

[Essential Elements of School Threat Assessment Webinar](#)
[Trauma-Informed Resilience-Oriented Toolkit](#)
[Lockdown Drills Self-Paced Training](#)
[School Resource Officer Video Series](#)
[School Safety Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Video](#)
[Extreme Risk Protection Orders Video](#)

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About the National Center for School Safety

The National Center for School Safety (NCSS) is a Bureau of Justice Assistance-funded training and technical assistance center at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. As a multidisciplinary, multi-institutional center focused on improving school safety and preventing school violence, the NCSS team is composed of national leaders in criminal justice, education, social work, and public health with expertise in school safety research and practice. NCSS provides comprehensive and accessible support to Students, Teachers, and Officers Preventing (STOP) School Violence grantees and the school safety community nationwide to address today's school safety challenges. NCSS serves as the national training and technical assistance provider for the STOP School Violence Program.

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