SAFECOMMUNITIES

SAFE

SAFESCHOOLS

PLANNINGGUIDE

WHAT IS A SAFE SCHOOL PLAN?

A safe school plan is a framework for action that guides current and future planning. It addresses both the behavioral and physical safety aspects of violence prevention. The goal of safe school planning is to create and maintain a positive and welcoming school climate free from drugs, violence, intimidation, and fear—an environment where teachers can teach and students can learn.
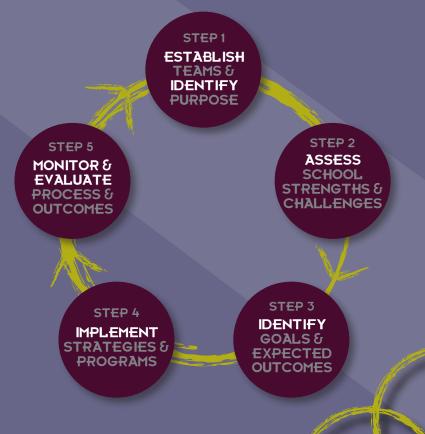
No two safe school plans will be exactly the same. Each school community must identify its own needs and the strategies necessary to meet those needs. A safe school plan is not static, but an ongoing process. Whether you are currently experiencing problems with violence or not, now is the time to institute a school/community plan to ensure a peaceful environment for children to grow and learn. The key to developing a safe school is to create a welcoming and supportive environment with clear guidelines for appropriate behavior that are enforced fairly and consistently.

Establishing a safe school plan is a long-term, systematic, and comprehensive process. The most effective safe school planning effort involves both the school and the community.

STEPS TO DEVELOP A SAFE SCHOOL PLAN

STEP 1
ESTABLISH TEAMS & IDENTIFY PURPOSE

STEP 2
ASSESS SCHOOL STRENGTHS & CHALLENGES

STEP 3
IDENTIFY GOALS & EXPECTED OUTCOMES

STEP 4
IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES & PROGRAMS

STEP 5
MONITOR & EVALUATE PROCESS & OUTCOMES

ESTABLISH TEAMS & IDENTIFY PURPOSE

Since many schools and districts have established teams to address safety issues, the following information can be used to enhance the existing team process. For those schools and districts with no existing teams, the information below can help in forming teams:

PLANNING TEAM:

The planning team will be involved in all steps of the safe school planning process, including development of its mission and vision for a safe school. It has oversight of all safe school planning efforts for the school in coordination with the district. Team members can include school administrators, board of education members, teachers, parents, government representatives, business and religious leaders, and law enforcement officials. A Planning Team may also seek input from students.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEAM:

School-based and district-level crisis teams are responsible for addressing identified needs before and after a crisis occurs. The team develops a plan with guidelines for membership, protocols for crisis management and response, and procedures for recovery. Members may include campus police, school social workers, school psychologists and teachers from all education levels. The Emergency Response and Crisis Management Team may also seek input from families and students. At least one member of this team should serve on the Planning Team for continuity and coordination.

INTERAGENCY SOCIAL SUPPORT TEAM (ISST):

The ISST will promote information sharing between schools, law enforcement agencies, and mental health organizations guided by the Colorado Safe Schools Act. Based on information received from a variety of sources, this team triages students and then may recommend services or make a referral to a threat assessment team. In coordination with the ISST, the threat assessment team evaluates and recommends appropriate action for students referred by the ISST. The ISST may include a principal, school psychologist, special education teacher, law enforcement official, social worker, mental health professional, prosecutor, and juvenile justice representative. At least one member of the ISST should serve on the Planning Team for continuity and coordination.

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ASSESS SCHOOL STRENGTHS & CHALLENGES

If possible, the following assessments should be conducted at least bi-annually: a pre-planning assessment, climate survey, and safety/security assessment. These assessments will determine a school's strengths and challenges to assist in developing a plan for addressing them:

PRE-PLANNING CHECKLIST

This checklist will be used to identify programs, strategies and measures that are already in place which address student safety. A review of this checklist will help to develop priorities and address areas that are of concern.

SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY

Administer climate surveys to students, staff, and parents to assess perceptions of safety, feelings and attitudes toward school, fairness of behavior codes and discipline policies, respect for authority, and relationships at school. Results of the surveys will assist in determining the overall condition of the school, student and staff morale and the school's violence prevention and safety needs.

SAFETY/SECURITY SITE AUDIT

Assess safety conditions in and around the school to identify concerns related to physical safety and building security. Results will serve to develop priorities for action that become goals of the safe school plan.

The Pre-Planning Checklist and the School Climate Surveys are available at www.colorado.edu/cspv/safeschools.

IDENTIFY GOALS & EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Through a strategic planning process, the planning team will examine existing data (pre-planning checklist, climate surveys, safety and security site assessment, office referrals) to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The result of this strategic planning process will allow the planning team to develop goals and expected outcomes before moving to the next step.

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IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES & PROGRAMS

Strategies and violence prevention programs should be implemented to meet the needs identified during the assessment process and recognized as a goal during strategic planning. Strategies can include updating crisis plans, developing appropriate teams to meet needs, revising school policies, and establishing a tip line (www.safe2tell.org). For a list of violence and drug prevention programs that have demonstrated the highest level of effectiveness through research and evaluation for implementation based on identified needs, see the Safe School PROGRAM GUIDE.

MONITOR & EVALATE PROCESS & OUTCOMES

In an effort to determine whether strategies, interventions or programs are being implemented as planned and whether expected outcomes are being generated, it is important to conduct the following evaluations:

PROCESS EVALUATION
Assess the delivery and quality of a program by describing and documenting how well the program or strategy is being implemented in comparison to its intent.

OUTCOME EVALUATION
Systematically assess program results. Examine outcome data in order to determine how well a program is achieving its goals. A rigorous evaluation uses a comparison or control group and random assignment to determine whether the outcomes would have occurred in the absence of the program or intervention.
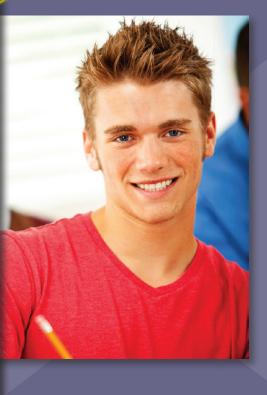
REPEAT STEPS 1-5 AS NECESSARY.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For detailed information about selecting, implementing, monitoring and evaluating programs, please refer to the Safe School ACTION GUIDE.

When your team is ready to choose an appropriate program for your school, the Safe School PROGRAM GUIDE summarizes the most effective programs and lists them by program type, target population, setting, risk factors and effectiveness.

SAFE COMMUNITIES • SAFE SCHOOLS PARTNERS:

Colorado Attorney General's Office
Safe2Tell
Center for the Study and Prevention of
 Violence

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