

A Dozen Things Teachers Can Do to Stop School Violence

- Report to the principal as quickly as possible any threats, signs of or discussions of weapons, signs of gang activity, or other conditions that might invite or encourage violence.
- Set norms for behavior in your classroom. Refuse to permit violence. Ask students to help set penalties and enforce the rules.
- Invite parents to talk with you about their children's progress and any concerns they have. Send home notes celebrating children's achievements.
- Learn how to recognize the warning signs that a child might be headed for violence and know how to tap school resources to get appropriate help.
- Encourage and sponsor student-led anti-violence activities and programs ranging from peer education, teen courts, and mediation to mentoring and training.
- Offer to serve on a team or committee to develop and implement a Safe School Plan, including how teachers and other school staff should respond in emergencies.
- Enforce school policies that seek to reduce the risk of violence. Take responsibility for areas outside as well as inside your classroom.
- Insist that students not resort to name-calling or teasing. Encourage them to demonstrate the respect they expect. Involve them in developing standards of acceptable behavior.
- Teach with enthusiasm. Students engaged in work that is challenging, informative, and rewarding are less likely to get into trouble.
- Learn and teach conflict resolution and anger management skills. Help your students practice applying them in everyday life. Discuss them in the context of what you teach.
- Incorporate discussions on violence and its prevention into the subject matter you teach whenever possible.
- Encourage students to report crimes or activities that make them suspicious.