

Blueprint Step 1: Understanding Your Audience

What is the role of teachers as it relates to school safety?

While the primary duty of teachers is to deliver instruction to students and help them learn, they are also responsible for helping to keep students safe during the school day. Teachers play an important role in creating safe and supportive learning environments and often have trusted relationships and lines of communication with their students. They also help shape the school's culture and values.

How can I work with my child's teacher(s) to improve school safety?

Your school's current safety efforts may already be outlined and available on the school or district website, and if so, it is important to familiarize yourself with them as a first step. A conversation about school safety with your child's teacher or educators within your school community is another great place to start. If you've never raised this topic with your child's teacher before, consider starting with an introductory one-on-one call or meeting to get a basic understanding of all they and the school currently do to create a safe and supportive learning environment for your child and for all students. In doing so, you may learn about the unique pressures teachers and educators in your community face when it comes to promoting school safety and how you might work together. Whenever possible, helping to address the unique pressures that teachers and educators face will increase the likelihood of them being able to meaningfully collaborate and contribute to your school safety efforts.

Remember, a teacher may be a good teammate in the work to build a safe school environment. Building a positive, long-lasting relationship with your child's teacher and educators in your community will be key to success.

Write here what you have learned about your teacher

Blueprint Step 2: Preparing for Your Conversation

Who should be at this meeting?

Meeting with a teacher or educator is most effective when it is a one-on-one conversation. Unless the teacher requests more people, meetings with teachers should generally include fewer people.

When you're ready to facilitate a meeting with your child's teacher, reach out to them. If you don't have their contact information, you can usually find it on your school's website or by calling the school. To familiarize yourself with the work already underway prior to a school safety meeting with a teacher, or any school employee or educator for that matter, review the school website and any resources the school has sent to families on the topic of school safety.

Other concerned parents and guardians may also want to meet with a teacher or group of teachers, and they should be encouraged to schedule their own one-on-ones. Other parents having one-on-one meetings with teachers signals the importance of school safety in the community.

What topics do we want to discuss at this meeting?

Prepare and send an agenda to your child's teacher prior to the meeting to give them an idea of what you'd like to discuss. Ideally, the agenda should include topics for discussion (or possible discussions) and questions you have related to school safety. An agenda template is provided below; tailor it to meet your needs and the needs of the teacher(s) or educator(s) with whom you are meeting.

Blueprint for Working with Teachers to Improve School Safety

Write here who you will be inviting to the meeting and logistical details

Write here the topics you plan to discuss with your teacher

Blueprint Step 3: Discussion and Further Action

Remember that this conversation is an opportunity for you to provide feedback and build a relationship with your child’s teacher or educators within your school community around school safety issues. Take notes, ask questions, listen closely and commit to continued conversation, collaboration and action alongside teachers and educators in your community.

There are many ways you can collaborate with your child’s teacher beyond this initial conversation on school safety. Consider suggesting these next steps:

- **Invite your child’s teacher and other educators to speak about school safety at a PTA meeting** to share existing efforts and answer questions.
- **Ask your child’s teacher to highlight school safety in regular communications with families.** Offer to help gather resources to share in those communications.
- **Encourage your child’s teacher to share your feedback with the school administration,** including any concerns and suggestions you shared around the school’s safety protocols and planning process.
- **Ask your child’s teacher if they can connect you with someone representing the teachers’ union to discuss potentially collaborating on school safety issues.**

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Write here your notes from the meeting

Write here the next steps and follow up for after the meeting

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Sample Meeting Agenda

- **Introductions.** *Who is in attendance and what is their role and relationship to the school? Why is the issue of school safety important to them?*
- **Concerns & Incidents.** *Since teachers are mandatory reporters, what is the process for teachers, students and families to report when they witness a concerning behavior? How would you as a teacher respond to such concerns? In what situations would you refer a student to a mental health professional or to law enforcement? When an incident occurs, like a student bringing a weapon to school, what is the protocol for responding? Would you or someone else communicate with families about the incident? What are some ways to best support students when an incident occurs at school, at home or in the community?*
- **Positive School Climate.** *Do you think your classroom is an environment that fosters trust-building, connection and a sense of belonging for students? Do you feel the school as a whole provides this type of environment? What could be done to improve the school climate and culture, in your opinion? Do you feel your efforts to create a positive school climate are supported with adequate funding and sufficient staffing?*
- **Safety Education.** *How do you teach students about staying safe? Is safety education, specifically discussing gun safety or preventing violence, a formal part of the school curriculum? Is social emotional learning part of your classroom activities and lessons? If not, is it something you would be interested in learning more about?*
- **Teacher Training.** *How are teachers trained to respond to emergencies? What professional development opportunities do teachers currently have to handle safety issues, for example do you receive training in bullying prevention? Safe de-escalation techniques, how to identify concerning behavior? Trauma-informed care? And if not, is there any topic you would be interested in getting more guidance or training around?*
- **Active Shooter Drills.** *How do active shooter drills work at our school? How is the timing of drills determined and are any drills planned for this school year that would involve students? Would families hear from you when an active shooter drill is scheduled and coming up? How do you talk to students about drills before and after they happen? How do you accommodate students who could be traumatized by such drills? Are there teacher-only drills, and if so, how are they conducted?*

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- **Recovery.** *What is the protocol for supporting staff and students after a safety incident occurs at the school or in the community? Who are the personnel in the building that would provide support to traumatized or grieving students? What channels can students and staff use to seek out more support?*
- **School Buildings.** *What physical security measures are in place to promote school safety without undermining the school environment or causing psychological harm to the students and teachers?*
- **Teacher Well-Being & Support.** *How can parents, guardians and families help support your work as a teacher, especially your work to ensure a safe and positive school climate?*
- **Thank You & Next Steps** *How can the school community ally together to make our school a safer place for all students?*

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Resources

Below are examples of available tools and resources for parent leaders and teachers to use when working on school safety issues.

- [NEA School Gun Violence Prevention and Response Guide](#) and [NEA Gun Violence Resource Webpage](#): Resources for educators from the National Education Association (NEA) to help prevent, prepare for, respond to and facilitate recovery from gun violence in all education settings.
- [Gun Violence Resource](#): Resources from the American Federation of Teachers
- [Teachers Unify to End Guidance](#)
- [Caring for Students in the Aftermath of a Tragedy or Threat of Gun Violence: Suggestions from Students & Teachers](#)
- [Raise Your Voice! Social Media Advocacy 101 for Educators & School Staff](#)
- [School Employee Mental and Social Emotional Health resources](#): Resources for promoting the mental and social emotional health of school employees.

Checklist for Working with Teachers on School Safety

- Review** the publicly available school safety information (see Blueprint Step 1).
- Develop** a trust-based relationship with your child's teacher and other educators from your school community (see Blueprint Step 1).
- Schedule** a meeting with your child's teacher(s) (see Blueprint Step 2).
- Draft and distribute** an agenda in advance of the meeting (see Blueprint Step 2).
- Assemble** a list of school safety related questions, concerns and requests (see Blueprint Step 2). If helpful, use the resources listed above.
- Meet** with your child's teacher and/or other educators from your school community (see Blueprint Step 3).
- Commit** to next steps with your child's teacher(s) (see Blueprint Step 3).