

Mitigating Weapons and Violence in Schools

Key facts about school gun violence

- There are nearly always warning signs
- Those discharging guns on school grounds most likely have a connection to the school
- Guns normally come from home, family, or friends
- Gun violence in American schools has a disproportionate impact on students of color



Incident Statistics
Active Shooter Incidents 2017-2021
U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Common Themes of Concerning Behaviors

Treats to the target or others, and/or intent to attack

Intense or escalating anger

Interest in weapons

Sadness, depression, or isolation

Changes in behavior or appearance

Suicide and/or self-harm

Interest in violence

Talk of being bullied

Concerns over grades/attendance

Harassing others

Concerning Behaviors

Every attacker (100%) exhibited concerning behaviors prior to their attack, displayed at school; (77% reported behaviors in community or home and 74% online notices)

Concerning behaviors include fearful actions such as:

- out of character statements
- minor changes in behavior
- direct threats of violence
- brought weapons to school
- 100% of perpetrators showed concerning behaviors
- 77% of the time at least one person, most often a peer, knew about their plan
- 73% of school shooters acquired their firearm from the home of a parent or close relative

These signs signal opportunities to recognize students in crisis apt for intervention. Taking immediate action on those warning signs is essential for prevention.

Fostering a trusting and emotionally safe school climate where staff are approachable and students are willing to both ask and report destructive thoughts and behaviors, gun threats on social media or weapons carrying

Effective Prevention Policies to Curb School Violence

1. **Prevention:** Establish a three-tiered community prevention model: Pre-event; Threat Assessment Standardized Protocol; Monitoring
2. **Pre-event:** Tip lines and other reporting mechanisms
3. **Threat Assessments:** Establish multi-disciplinary threat assessment teams
4. **Monitor:** Continue to observe escalating behaviors and implement counter measures

This supplementary handout provides key points presented during the Mitigating Weapons and Violence in Schools training provided on May 4, 2023 by Dr. Kate Speck. Additional educational materials and references can be found on the PICS webpage: <https://casatondemand.org/pics>