



Guidance for Public Schools, Charter Schools,
Renaissance School Projects and Approved Private
Schools for Students with Disabilities
on School Violence Awareness Week
in Accordance with *N.J.S.A. 18A:36-5.1*

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Prepared by:

**Office of Student Support Services
Division of Learning Supports and Specialized Services
New Jersey Department of Education**

**Guidance for Public School Districts, Charter Schools, Renaissance School Projects
and Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities
on School Violence Awareness Week
in Accordance with *N.J.S.A. 18A:36-5.1***

- All public school districts, charter schools, Renaissance school projects and approved private schools for students with disabilities (APSSDs) are required to annually designate the third week in October as School Violence Awareness Week. Activities should address preventing school violence, including, but not limited to, age-appropriate opportunities for student discussion about conflict resolution, issues of student diversity, and tolerance.
- During this week, schools should provide students, parents, school district staff and law enforcement staff opportunities to discuss methods for keeping schools safe from violence, to consider school safety and security plans; and to learn how to recognize students in need of help.
- Law enforcement personnel **must be invited** to join members of the teaching staff in the discussion of methods to keep schools safe from violence.
- Programs also **must** be provided for school employees that are designed to help them recognize warning signs of school violence and instruct them on recommended conduct during an incident of school violence.
- Ideas to consider in promoting the importance of school safety include:
 - Discussions about school policies and procedures for addressing violence and school crises;
 - Identification and assessment of troubled youth;
 - Involvement of parents and other community members;
 - Dissemination of informational materials;
 - Infusion of violence awareness lessons into the academic curriculum;
 - Implementation of character education and social and emotional learning activities that endorse respect, responsibility and tolerance;
 - Use of keynote speakers with expertise in bullying prevention or related violence prevention topics;
 - Presentation of lessons on conflict resolution, peer mediation, and bullying prevention by students; and
 - Training for school board employees in the areas of violence prevention and intervention, crisis response and related district policies and procedures.

Activity Planning

Provided below are suggested guidelines for school staff to consider in planning for School Violence Awareness Week. Additionally, some available resources are included in this document to aid in planning.

Student Discussions

Schools are **required** to organize activities to prevent school violence, including, but not limited to, age-appropriate opportunities for student discussion on conflict resolution,

bullying prevention, and issues of student diversity and tolerance. Law enforcement officers **must be invited** to join members of the school staff in the discussions.

School Employee Programs

Schools are **required** to provide programs for school employees that are designed to help them recognize warning signs for school violence and to instruct them on policies, procedures and recommended conduct during an incident of school violence. A few web resources for information on warning signs are:

- [Safe, Supportive and Successful Schools Step by Step](#);
- [American Psychological Association Warning Signs of Youth Violence](#); and
- [National School Safety and Security Services Warning Signs of Youth Violence](#).

Considerations in Planning Activities for Students

In planning activities with students, staff may want to consider the following tips:

- Organize **small-group** activities, as opposed to large-group presentations;
- Conduct **student-centered**, rather than adult-centered activities;
- Plan activities that are **age-appropriate**;
- Implement activities that build **skills** for non-violent responses to conflict; and
- Provide **follow-up** opportunities for processing information learned, asking questions, reinforcing information or skills learned, and to ensure understanding.

Resources

Provided below are several tables of resources that may be helpful in planning activities for School Violence Awareness Week, as well as for improving the school safety. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of violence-related resources, but a diverse collection of supportive resources that school staff could review while considering their School Violence Awareness Week activities.

Organizations

Website Resource	Description
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry	Various resources dedicated to child and adolescent psychiatry.
American Counseling Association	Various resources dedicated to the social and emotional development of children.
American Psychological Association	Various materials for educators, parents, and children.
American School Counselor Association	Listing of resources and additional links.
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development	Various materials, training, research, and additional resources for educators.
Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence	(Formerly the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence) National initiatives include prevention programs for parents and youth on the risks associated with guns, legal representation for gun violence victims, and outreach to the entertainment community to encourage the de-glamorization of guns in the media.
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	The CDC provides a variety of fact sheets on violence and injury prevention.
Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning	Provides research and publications on the relationship between social-emotional learning and school success.
Cyberbullying Research Center (CRC)	The CRC provides up-to-date information about the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of cyberbullying among adolescents.
Keys to Safer Schools	This website equips teachers, students, parents, administrators and counselors with tools, training and materials.
Knowledge Path: Adolescent Violence Prevention	This online guide, compiled by the Maternal and Child Health Library at Georgetown University, offers a selection

Website Resource	Description
	of resources for further research, including lists of websites, articles and print materials on adolescent violence.
National Association of Elementary School Principals	Various resources and additional links.
National Association of School Psychologists	Various resources related to violence for parents and educators.
National Association of School Resource Officers	Various resources and additional links.
National Center for School Engagement (NCSE)	The NCSE provides training and technical assistance, research and evaluation to school districts, law enforcement agencies and courts, as well as state and federal agencies, on student attendance, attachment and achievement.
National Crime Prevention Council - Be Safe and Sound in School	Be Safe and Sound is a public education campaign that seeks to raise awareness of school safety and security issues and to provide concrete measures that parents, community members and educators can take to make schools safer and more secure.
National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention	Provides extensive information on youth violence prevention.
National Institute of Mental Health	Contains in-depth links on trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder.
National Parent Teachers Association (PTA)	Various resources, activities and additional links for educators, parents and youth.
National School Safety Center (NSSC)	The NSSC provides school communities and their school safety partners with quality information, resources, consultation and training services.
Operation Respect: Don't Laugh at Me	A nonprofit organization dedicated to creating safe, caring and respectful environments for children.

Website Resource	Description
Prevention Institute	Provides information on creating safe environments, violence prevention strategies and programs.

New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE)

Website Resource	Description
Administrative Code: Chapter 16, Programs to Support Student Development.	Provides parameters for health and student support services, including Subchapter 5, School Safety and Security.
Keeping Our Kids Safe, Healthy and In School	Resources to support positive student behavior, safe and supportive learning environments, student health, social services, harassment, intimidation and bullying and afterschool programs.
Media Violence and Youth	A pamphlet on the impact of a child's exposure to media violence.
New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education	Resources emphasizing the importance of respecting diversity and appreciating others, as well as lesson plans that provide ways to deal with issues of prejudice and bias in the classroom.
New Jersey School Climate Survey	A free resource for schools to assist in reinforcing positive conditions and addressing vulnerabilities for learning.
School Preparedness and Emergency Planning	Resources on school security.
Social and Emotional Learning	Resources for schools and families supporting the awareness and development of social and emotional skills.

Other Resources

Website Resource	Description
<u>A Uniform State Memorandum of Agreement Between Education And Law Enforcement Officials</u>	The MOA has been designed to ensure cooperation between law enforcement and education officials and ultimately to protect the educational environment.
<u>The Center for Problem-Oriented Policing</u>	A webpage detailing how bullying in schools can be detrimental to the school community, reasons why bullying occurs and strategies for ways to respond to bullying.
<u>Stopbullying.gov</u>	StopBullying.gov provides information from various government agencies on what bullying is, what cyberbullying is, who is at risk, and how you can prevent and respond to bullying.
<u>Teacher Vision Bullying Resource Kit</u>	A community violence prevention kit of resources and training materials for community members to organize violence-prevention forums and related initiatives.
<u>Gang Resistance Education And Training (G.R.E.A.T.)</u>	Gang Resistance Education And Training (G.R.E.A.T.) is an evidence-based gang and violence prevention program built around school-based, law enforcement officer-instructed classroom curricula
<u>Helping Children Deal with Scary News</u>	The Children's Hospital of Los Angeles offers a few guidelines to keep in mind so parents can be better equipped to help their children handle frightening news.
<u>Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Model Program Guide (OJJDP)</u>	The OJJDP Model Programs Guide (MPG) is designed to assist practitioners and communities in implementing evidence-based violence prevention and intervention programs. The MPG database of evidence-based programs covers the entire continuum of youth services from prevention through sanctions to reentry.
<u>Reducing Bullying: Meeting the Challenge</u>	Developed by SafeSchools.org, this document offers guidelines schools may consider as they work to reduce and prevent bullying behaviors.

Applicable Statute

NEW JERSEY STATUTES ANNOTATED
TITLE 18A. EDUCATION
SUBTITLE 6. CONDUCT OF SCHOOLS
PART 2. FACILITIES AND CONDUCT OF SCHOOLS
CHAPTER 36. CONDUCT OF SCHOOLS IN GENERAL

N.J.S.A. 18A:36-5.1. "School Violence Awareness Week"

The week beginning with the third Monday in October of each year is designated as "School Violence Awareness Week" in the State of New Jersey. School districts shall observe this week by organizing activities to prevent school violence including, but not limited to, age-appropriate opportunities for student discussion on conflict resolution, issues of student diversity, and tolerance. Law enforcement personnel shall be invited to join members of the teaching staff in the discussions. Programs shall also be provided for school board employees that are designed to help them recognize warning signs of school violence and to instruct them on recommended conduct during an incident of school violence. The Department of Education shall provide guidelines and information to boards of education for use in planning the activities in observance of the week and such funds as are necessary to pay the costs of the required activities and programs.
