

School Safety for Educators

Students learn and do their best work when they feel safe, respected, and welcome in school.ⁱ Helping students feel safe includes promoting their physical and emotional well-being and ensuring they have a positive relationship with trusted adults in school.ⁱⁱ Helping students feel respected and welcome means actively reaching out, as well as valuing their perspectives and cultural backgrounds.ⁱⁱⁱ It also means making an intentional effort to protect them from bullying and other harmful behaviors.^{iv}

In 2017, more than 1 in 5 students ages 12–18 reported being bullied in school.^v



In 2016, more than 1 in 3 students said they were bullied online.^{vi}



According to an April 2010 national study,^{vii} school staff members witnessed bullying:

at least once in the last month



86%

two or more times in the last month



61%

once a week or more.



40%

HOW TO ESTABLISH SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS^{viii}

- 1 Maintain a 5-to-1 ratio of positive to negative statements with each student.
- 2 Set and teach behavioral expectations that value students' cultural diversity.
- 3 Teach and model social and emotional learning (SEL) skills, such as perspective-taking, empathy, and active listening.
- 4 Intervene early when students begin to show academic, behavioral, or social difficulties.
- 5 Encourage students to share any safety concerns—even if it is simply a feeling that “something is not right.”
- 6 Teach students and families how to prevent and respond to bullying and unsafe situations.

WHAT TO DO IF STUDENTS SHARE SAFETY CONCERNS^{ix}

- 1 Take each school safety concern seriously and protect students' confidentiality.
- 2 Use empathy and active listening to learn about the students' perspective and concerns.
- 3 Use a nonjudgmental, solution-focused approach to learn the facts about the unsafe situation.
- 4 Protect students' physical, emotional, and/or psychological well-being.
- 5 Report each concern to the administrator or team responsible for school safety.
- 6 Seek help if you are having difficulty supporting an individual student or a group of students.

Additional information about school safety

National School Safety Center <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/resources/national-school-safety-center>

National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/>

OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports <https://www.pbis.org/>

Cyberbullying Research Center <https://cyberbullying.org/>

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RESOURCES

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