



SCHOOL VIOLENCE AWARENESS WEEK

Emmons School

October 2020

Dear Teachers/Staff,

The week of **October 19th– October 23rd**, Emmons School will be celebrating **School Violence Awareness Week**. There will activities to acknowledge this event. The goal of this week is to make educators, students, parents, and the community aware of effective ways to prevent and reduce youth violence. Encourage your students to refrain from violence and help them cope with conflict. Below is some information on school violence as well as some tips for helping students to stay calm and know that violence is never the answer to a problem. In addition, I have provided tips for parents and teachers to talk to children about violence.

What is School Violence?

School violence includes any acts, relationships, or processes that use power over others, exercised by whatever means, such as structural, social, physical, emotional, or psychological, in a school, or school-related setting or through the organization of schooling and that harm another person or group of people by reducing them from what they are or by limiting them from being what they might become for any period of time.

Statistics on School Violence

According to [CDC's nationwide Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)](https://www.cdc.gov/youthrisk/yrbbs/):

- Nearly 9% of high school students had been in a physical fight on school property one or more times during the 12 months before the survey.
- About 6% of students had been threatened or injured with a weapon (for example, a gun, knife, or club) on school property one or more times during the 12 months before the survey.
- About 7% of students had not gone to school at least 1 day during the 30 days before the survey because they felt they would be unsafe at school or on their way to or from school.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/schoolviolence/fastfact.html>

Stressors Contributing to Youth Violence

A variety of social and economic factors can contribute to violent and aggressive behavior by children at home, in school, and in the community. Children, especially teens, are influenced by numerous stress factors. Some of these stressors might include:

- Physical, psychological, and/or emotional abandonment by parents, adults, and significant others
- Domestic violence, abuse, neglect, and/or other severe family stress or dysfunction
- Lack of order, structure, and discipline
- Self-concept formation, peer pressure, need to protect reputation, and related developmental issues
- Alcohol, drug, and similar influences
- Gang, cult, or another deviant subculture attraction
- Pressure to succeed academically
- Fear of the unknown, fear of rejection, and fear of failure

Parents, school officials, and other youth-service providers can take numerous steps to reduce the stressors on children and to reduce the risks of youth violence. Some of these steps might include:

- Establishing ongoing, sincere, and trusting relationships with youth built upon regular, quality communications
- Being sensitive to the stressors influencing children and providing timely intervention support
- Being alert for, and promptly responding to, issues such as:
 - Detachment: A lack of bonding and “connectedness” to others
 - Withdrawal or perceptions of hopelessness
 - Threats — and the efforts to establish the means and opportunity to carry out the threats
 - Disciplinary problems in school and/or delinquent, criminal activity in schools or communities
 - Unusual interest or preoccupation with weapons, bombs, and violent forms of “entertainment”
 - Abuse of animals, suicide threats or attempts, self-mutilation, etc.

Talk to children honestly and, if necessary, seek professional help BEFORE a crisis!

Source: <https://www.schoolsecurity.org/trends/warning-signs-of-youth-violence/>

Addressing Violence: Teach Your Child to ACT CALM

When children get mad, they can ACT:

Acknowledge

- Acknowledge angry feelings. Notice changes in their bodies.

Calm down

- Breathe deeply, count to 10, or walk away. Punch a pillow, run, or play music.

Think and talk

- Think about the problem and ways to fix it.
- Talk with someone about being mad and ways to fix the problem without fighting. If there is nobody to talk to right away, stop and think, "This is why I'm mad and what I need to do is..."

If someone tries to start a fight, your child can be the one to stay CALM:

Calm down

- Keep a safe distance from the other person. Take slow, deep breaths. Stay alert and stand tall.

Avoid

- Avoid name-calling or returning insults. It only makes things worse. Avoid other kids who may want to fight.

Listen

- Calmly listen to what the other kid says. Ask, "What does this person really want?"

Move on

- Find ways to solve the problem without fighting.
 - Use humor. "I wouldn't want you to catch my cold."
 - Give a reason. "We'll both get thrown off the team if we fight."
 - Walk away. If nothing else works, it's best to walk away.

Source: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/emotional-wellness/Pages/Everybody-Gets-Mad-Helping-Your-Child-Cope-with-Conflict.aspx>

Talking to Children about Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers

High profile acts of violence, particularly in schools, can confuse and frighten children who may feel in danger or worry that their friends or loved ones are at risk. They will look to adults for information and guidance on how to react. Parents and school personnel can help children feel safe by establishing a sense of normalcy and security.

1. Reassure children that they are safe. Emphasize that schools are very safe. Validate their feelings. Explain that all feelings are okay when a tragedy occurs. Let children talk about their feelings, help put them in perspective, and assist them in expressing these feelings appropriately.
2. Keep your explanations developmentally appropriate. Elementary school children need brief, simple information that should be balanced with reassurances that their school and homes are safe and that adults are there to protect them. Give simple examples of school safety like reminding children about exterior doors being locked, child monitoring efforts on the playground, and emergency drills practiced throughout the school day.
3. Review safety procedures. This should include procedures and safeguards at school at home. Help children identify at least one adult at school and in the community to whom they go if they feel threatened or at risk.
4. Limit television viewing of the events. Developmentally inappropriate information can cause anxiety or confusion.
5. Maintain a normal routine. Keeping to a regular schedule can be reassuring.
6. Observe children's emotional state. Some children may not express their concerns verbally. Changes in behavior, appetite, sleep patterns can indicate a child's level of anxiety or discomfort. Children who have had a posttraumatic experience or personal loss, suffer from depression or mental illness, or with special needs may be at a greater risk for severe reactions than others. Seek the help of a mental health professional if you are at all concerned.

Suggested points to emphasize when talking to children...

- Schools are safe places. School staff works with public safety providers (local police and fire departments, emergency responders, hospitals, etc.) to keep you safe.
- We all play a role in the school safety. Be observant and let an adult know if you see or hear something that makes you uncomfortable, nervous, or frightened.
- Stay away from guns and other weapons. Tell an adult if you know someone has a gun.
- Violence is never a solution to our problems.

Source: <http://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/talking-to-children-about-violence-tips-for-parents-and-teachers>

To learn more about school violence:

CDC Division of Violence Prevention: www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention

StopBullying: www.stopbullying.gov

Emmons School will be participating in daily activities to acknowledge **School Violence Awareness Week**. These activities are focused on Social Emotional Learning (SEL), which is the

concept of how individuals understand and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, and establish and maintain positive relationships with others. There are both activities for in school (can be done in person for hybrid classes or remotely for full remote classes) as well as activities for at home.

Monday, 10/19-Feelings/Emotions

In School: ClassDojo: Moods and Attitudes-This activity series helps students learn about their feelings and control their attitude.

<https://ideas.classdojo.com/b/moods-and-attitudes>

At Home: Journaling Activity-Instruct students to keep a special journal to record feelings and memories. Encourage them to try to think of one positive thing each day. Students can draw or write their thoughts.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1edpQJRmYH9QRwx8oVL7HELr7okmm_dLh/view?usp=sharing

Tuesday, 10/20-Self-Awareness

In School: Classroom Discussion-As a class discuss why it is important to know one's strengths? Pose the question, "If you had to give yourself an award for one of your biggest strengths, what would it be?"

At Home: "I Am" Mirror- Suggest that families find a small mirror and post the saying, "I Am" at the top. Add sticky notes with positive words, such as special, kind, and hardworking, around the mirror that they can recite.

Wednesday, 10/21-Kindness

In School: Gratitude Worksheet-Have students write or draw what makes them happy.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/14eAkL70VGSd4NoKz3qiuGwqlKoCNGmBU/view?usp=sharing>

At Home: Paper Hearts – Instruct students to cut out paper hearts. Have them write personal messages of thanks, kindness, or appreciation for others. They can leave them on the windows or front door for service workers to see. Alternatively, they could post them in their house for family members to find.

Thursday 10/22-Mindfulness

In School: Have students watch this mindfulness video to help students learn ways to relax and calm down when feeling stressed.

https://youtu.be/nqQN4ugzj_g

At Home: Ask students to compete the mindfulness activity "Life is Good" with their family and loved ones at home. This game helps us reframe thoughts from negative to positive.

"Life is Good" exercise:

1. Roll a ball to each other. When the ball comes to you, name one thing that is bothering you. Then roll the ball back and say, "life is good."

Friday 10/23-Social Connectedness

In School: Watch "Count On Me" By Bruno Mars video

- Discussion: Discuss as a class, how does the song and video make you feel? What does it mean? How can we be a good friend to others?

https://youtu.be/h905_Q-oLrs

At Home: Spend Quality Time Family – Kids are naturally spending extra time with family. Provide them with home connection ideas that build a strong family foundation. Suggest a family game night, eating meals together at the table, having daily check-in chats to talk about how things are going, and so on.

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