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Preventing School Violence: Creating Safer Learning Environments

2024 National School-Based Health Care (NSBHC) Conference

July 2024

Paige Settles, Acting Program Manager for Partnerships, Policy, & Engagements | CISA School Safety Task Force
Program Specialist | SAMSHA

Agenda

- **Organizational Overview**
- **K-12 Risks & Threat Environment**
- **School Safety Best Practices**
- **Improving School Physical Security**
- **Encouraging Bystander Reporting**
- **SAMSHA Resources**
- **SchoolSafety.gov Tools & Resources**

Our School Safety Perspective

Overview

The CISA School Safety Task Force (SSTF) was established to support the Federal government's efforts in strengthening the safety and security of kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) schools across the country. SSTF's work centers around building the capacity of K-12 school safety community and administering the Federal School Safety Clearinghouse and SchoolSafety.gov.

School Safety Issue Areas

- Bullying and Cyberbullying
- Child Exploitation
- Cybersecurity
- Emergency Planning
- Infectious Disease & Public Health
- Mental Health
- Physical Security
- School Climate
- Targeted Violence
- Treat Assessment & Reporting

Mission

SSTF enhances the safety and security of schools by:
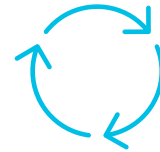
Fostering change through outreach, engagement, and educational campaigns
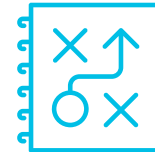
Facilitating action by creating, coordinating, and disseminating resources, products, and tools to support schools in implementing and strengthening their physical security postures

Equipping Stakeholders with training and expertise to apply recognized best practices in the context of their specific communities, venues, and schools

Federal School Safety Clearinghouse

- The Federal School Safety Clearinghouse was established following the deadly shooting in Parkland, FL in 2018

- The Clearinghouse is made up of the U.S. Department of Education, Homeland Security, Health and Human Services, and Justice

- SchoolSafety.gov is one-stop, government-wide school safety resource repository

- On June 25, 2022, the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act codified the Clearinghouse into Law

Practice school safety today. Not tomorrow.

SchoolSafety.gov

SAMSHA Mission & Overview

Who We Are.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation and to improve the lives of individuals living with mental and substance use disorders, and their families.

Mission.

SAMHSA's mission is to lead public health and service delivery efforts that promote mental health, prevent substance misuse, and provide treatments and supports to foster recovery while ensuring equitable access and better outcomes.

Project AWARE

talk they hear you®

stopbullying.gov

Opt-in & Interact Today

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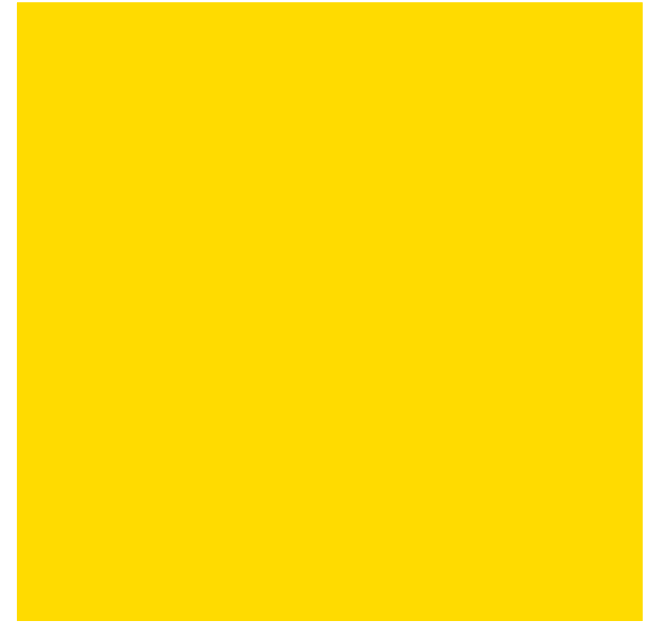
What best describes your role?

A **District Administrator** (e.g. Superintendent)

B **School Administrator** (e.g. Principal)

C **School Board Member**

D **School Staff** (e.g. Teacher)

E **School Based Law Enforcement**

F **State Level Education Organization**

G **Emergency Planner / Manager**

H **School Safety Organization Rep**

I **Parent**

J **Student**

K **Other**

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K-12 School Safety Risk & Threat Environment Trends

Current Trends within the K-12 Environment

School Violence

67% of public schools reported having at least one violent incident, and 59% reported having at least one nonviolent incident.[1]

Cybersecurity Threats

There has been a total of 1,331 publicly disclosed school cyber incidents affecting U.S. school districts across a wide of incidents from 2016-2022.[2]

Hoax Calls & Swatting

In the 2022-2023 school year, 63% of all violent incidents were false reports of an active shooter within the school (i.e., Swatting).[3]

Mental Health

In 2021, more than 42% of students felt persistently sad or hopeless and 29% experienced poor mental health.[4]

School Safety Best Practices

Best Practices, Guidance, and Tools to Create Safe School Environments

Supporting Student Mental Health
Mental health and wellness are innately connected to students' success in the classroom and to a thriving school environment.

Preventing Bullying
Bullying & Cyberbullying increases the risk for depression, anxiety, sleep difficulties, lower academic achievement, and dropping out of school.

Averting Violence
Improving schools' physical security and involving school personnel who are trained to prevent, recognize, and respond to threats of violence.

Ensuring Online Safety
These attacks can impact a school's ability to carry out its educational obligations and protect sensitive student and staff data.

HOLISTIC SAFETY

Intervening with Support Early
Identify and address threatening or escalating behaviors before they lead to violence.

Improving School Climate
Developing students with strong character who are connected to their peers, educators, and communities in meaningful ways can improve school climate, and behavioral and academic outcomes.

Training, Exercises, & Drills
Prepares students, teachers, staff, parents, and community partners for the actions to take before, during, and after safety incidents.

What safety topics are most relevant to your school?

A Bullying & Cyberbullying

B Child Exploitation

C Cybersecurity

D Emergency Planning

E Infectious Diseases & Public Health

F Mental Health

G School Climate

H Targeted Violence

I Threat Assessment & Reporting

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School Climate

School climate describes school conditions that influence student learning, including engagement, safety, and environment.

Recommendations

- Assess and measure school climate by evaluating practices, systems, and structures
- Create a safe school community that addresses issues like violence, bullying, harassment, and substance use
- Enable a supportive academic, disciplinary, and physical environment
- Foster strong school connections and relationships

School Climate Resources

Visit SchoolSafety.gov/school-climate to find resources, guides, and tools.

Bullying and Cyberbullying

Bullying is defined as unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived imbalance of power and is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.

Recommendations

- Assess the frequency, locations, and types of bullying behavior
- Set policies and rules that outline how students are expected to treat each other and provide training to school staff
- Establish a culture of inclusion and respect
- Implement social and emotional learning and other skills-building programs
- Engage parents and youth in bullying prevention efforts

Bullying and Cyberbullying Resources

Visit SchoolSafety.gov/bullying-and-cyberbullying to find resources, guides, and tools.

Child Exploitation

Child exploitation can take many forms and affects youth of any age, race, geographic location, or socioeconomic status.

Recommendations

- Understand the factors that make students vulnerable to exploitation
- Provide training on the risk factors and warning signs
- Establish and articulate clearly defined policies, protocols, and procedures for responding to potential cases
- Identify and build protective factors in the school setting
- Provide students, families, and educators with information regarding the dangers of online environments

Child Exploitation Resources

Visit SchoolSafety.gov/child-exploitation to find resources, guides, and tools.

Mental Health

Mental health is an important part of a child's overall health and well-being that affects how children think, feel, and act.

Recommendations

- Provide access to comprehensive school-based mental health services
- Implement a Multi-Tiered System of Supports
- Promote mental health literacy
- Adopt a schoolwide trauma-informed approach
- Create positive, safe, and affirming learning environments and promote school connectedness

Mental Health Resources

Visit SchoolSafety.gov/mental-health to find resources, guides, and tools.
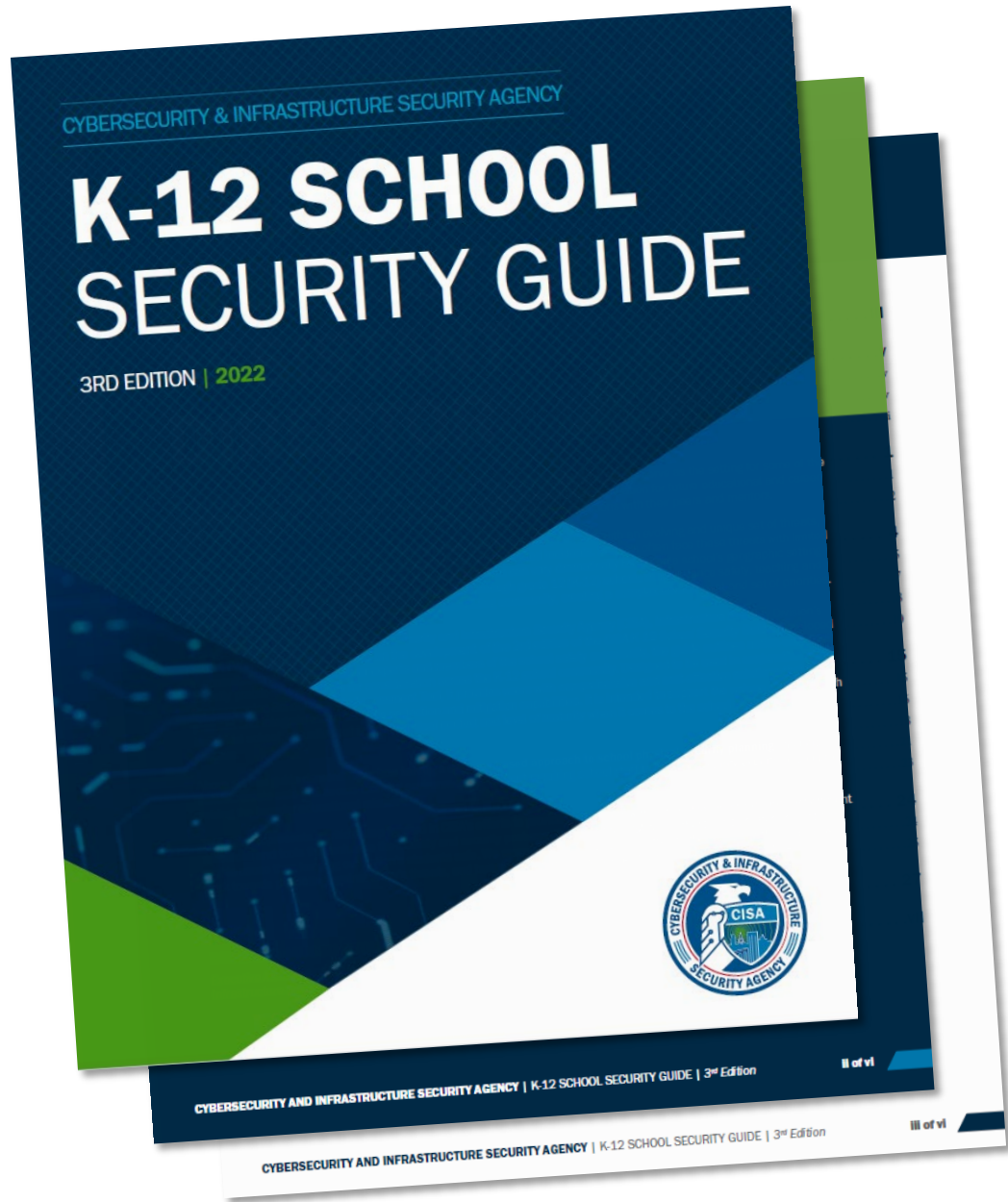
Implementing a Systems-Based Approach to School Physical Security

K-12 School Security Guide 3rd Edition | 2022

What physical security tools or tactics does your school use?

A **Security Perimeter** (e.g., Fencing & Barriers)

B **Entry Control** (e.g., Monitored Entries, ID Badges, Escort Visitors)

C **Broadcast Systems** (e.g., Loudspeakers)

D **Security Personnel** (e.g., Security Guards)

E **Motion Activated Lighting System**

F **Building Code-Approved Locks**

G **Visual Monitoring** (e.g., Cameras, CCTV)

H **2-Way Communications** (e.g., Alerts between Classrooms & Office)

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K-12 School Security Guide Key Themes

Schools can tailor the systems-based approach to meet unique circumstances

The systems-based approach integrates prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery

Layered systems help detect, delay, and respond to threats, and to prevent single points of failure

A layered systems-based approach creates cohesive physical security

A multi-disciplinary team should lead the security planning process

CYBERSECURITY & INFRASTRUCTURE SECURITY AGENCY

K-12 SCHOOL
SECURITY GUIDE
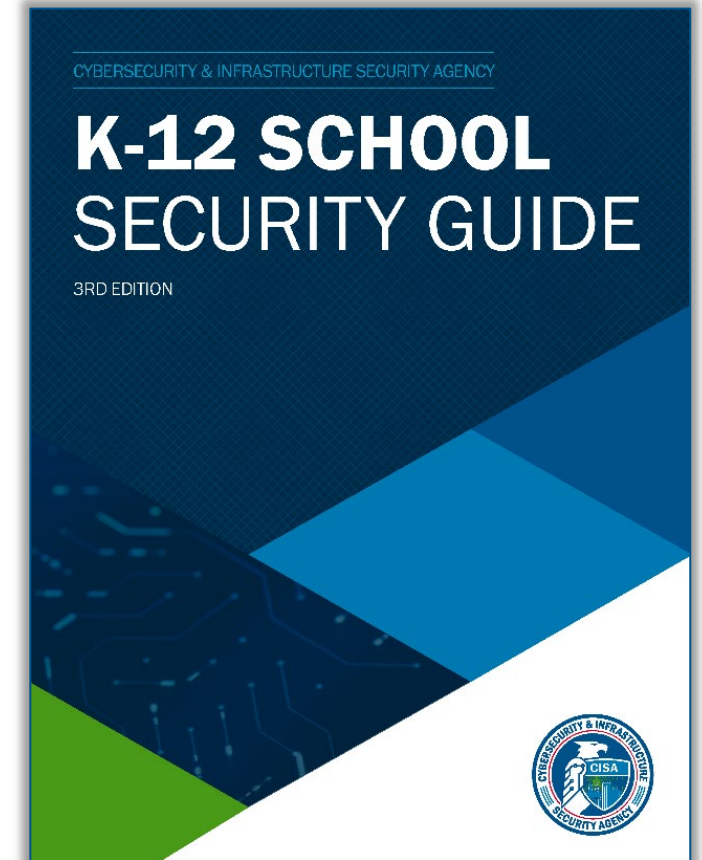
3RD EDITION

Product Suite Summary

- K-12 School Security Guide, 3rd Edition

- School Security Assessment Tool (SSAT)

- Video: SSAT "How-To" Video

- Virtual Training: General User

- Virtual Training: Train the Trainer

- K-12 Guide User Guide

- K-12 Guide Technical Appendix

Link: K-12 School Security Guide Product Suite
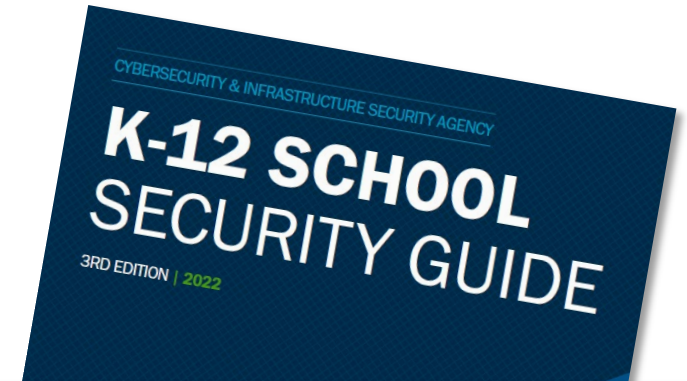
Improving School Safety Through Bystander Reporting

1st Edition | 2023

What reporting methods does your school offer?

A Phone Line

B Email

C Online Form

D Mobile App

E In Person

F Other

2024 NSB
July 2, 2(

The Reporting & Prevention Continuum

Individual Behaviors Causing Concern for Safety, Security, or Wellness

Awareness	Willingness to Report (TOOLKIT FOCUS)	Reporting Tools and Modes	Fielding and Triage	Responding to Reports (Assessment Process/Intervention)	
Bystander aware of concerning behavior	Bystander willing to report through an available mechanism	Trusted adults - Tip line - 911 call - Other methods	Report is received and reviewed in a timely way by appropriate personnel	Concerning behavior is assessed by relevant professionals	Action is taken to respond to the safety, security, or wellness concern

Link: K-12 Bystander Reporting Toolkit

CISA-NTAC K-12 Bystander Reporting Toolkit Strategies

This toolkit emphasizes five key strategies to encourage and support K-12 reporting systems:

1. Encourage bystanders to report concerns for the wellness and safety of themselves or others.

2. Make reporting accessible and safe for the reporting community.

3. Follow-up on reports and be transparent about the actions taken in response to reported concerns.

4. Make reporting a part of daily school life.

5. Create a positive climate where reporting is valued and respected.

SAMSHA Resources

Topics

- Community, Youth and School-Based Mental Health Care Grants

- Suicide Prevention

- Trauma-Informed Care

SchoolSafety.gov

Federal and State Resources, Guidance, and Tools to Create Safe School Environments

SchoolSafety.Gov

Safety Topics

- Bullying & Cyberbullying
- Child Exploitation
- Cybersecurity
- Emergency Planning
- Infectious Diseases & Public Health
- Mental Health
- School Climate
- Targeted Violence
- Threat Assessment & Reporting

Key Tools & Features

- Safety Readiness Tool
- State Search Tool
- Resource Library
- Calendar of Events
- Grants Finder Tool
- K-12 Community Bulletin
- Communications Center

Link: SchoolSafety.gov
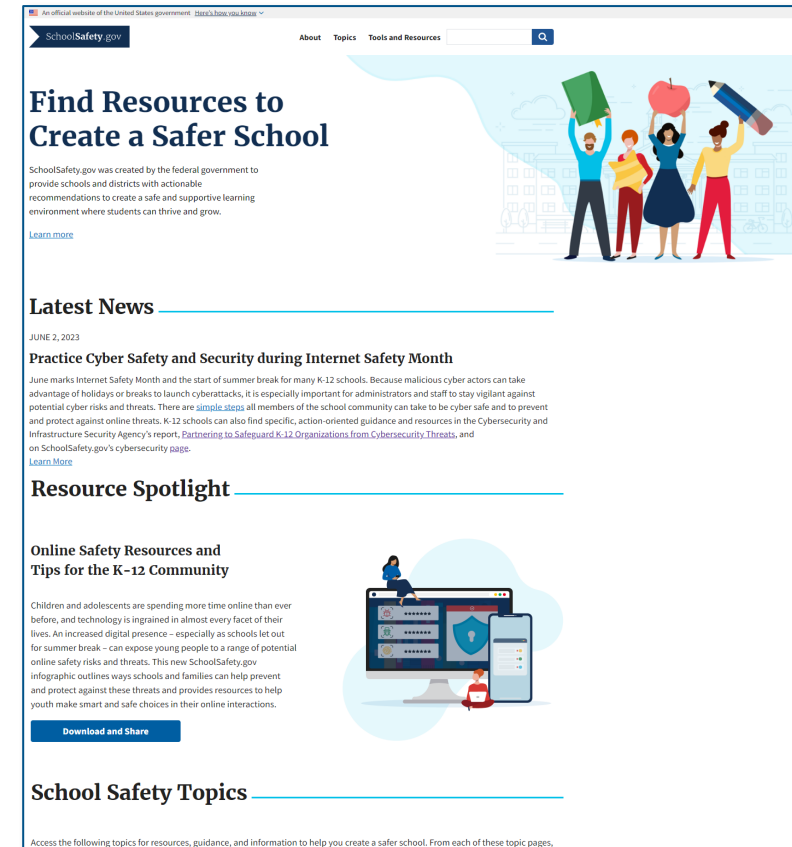
Grants Finder Tool

Helps members of the K-12 school community more easily find, apply for, and ultimately receive school safety-related Federal funding.

Safety Topic

Award Amount

Type of Grant

Applicable Audiences

Release & Deadlines

Level of Effort Needed

Funding Agency

Alerts & Notifications

Link: Grants Finder Tool

Question & Answer

Thank You

Contact Information and Questions

Follow Us on X for Upcoming Events and News! ⊗

- @SAMHSAGov
- @SchoolSafetyGov

Click here to sign up for regular updates or scan the QR code.

Key Resource Links

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- SAMHSA Grants Dashboard
- Project AWARE
- SchoolSafety.gov

SCAN ME

Questions, feedback, or ideas?
Please contact SchoolSafety@hq.dhs.gov

Resources & References

CISA

- K-12 School Security Guide Product Suite
- National Summit on K-12 School Safety and Security
- Active Shooter Preparedness: School Security and Resilience
- Protecting our Future: Partnering to Safeguard K-12 Organizations from Cybersecurity Threats
- Partnering to Safeguard K-12 Toolkit
- Bombing Prevention Resources and Trainings
- Securing Mass Gathering Resources
- De-Escalation of Violence Resources
- Tabletop Exercise Packages
- Protective Security Advisors (PSA)

SchoolSafety.gov

- Bystander Reporting Toolkit
- Grants Finder Tool
- Safety Readiness Tool
- State Information Sharing Tool
- Resource Library
- Calendar of Events
- Informational Webinar Series
- Monthly School Safety Community Bulletin
- Communication Center

DHS

- NTAS Bulletin
- CP3: Prevention Resources
- If You See Something, Say Something

USSS NTAC

- Mass Attacks in Public Spaces: 2016-2020
- Averting Targeted School Violence: A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Plots Against Schools
- Protecting America's Schools: A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Targeted School Violence
- Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model: An Operational Guide for Preventing Targeted School Violence