

A Dozen Things Students Can Do To Stop School Violence

1. Refuse to bring a weapon to school, refuse to carry a weapon for someone else, and refuse to keep silent about those who carry weapons.
2. Report any crime immediately to school authorities or police.
3. Report suspicious behavior or talk by other students to a teacher or counselor at your school. You may save someone's life.
4. Learn how to manage your own anger effectively. Find out ways to settle arguments by talking it out, working it out, or walking away rather than fighting.
5. Help others settle disputes peaceably. Start or join a peer mediation program, in which trained students help classmates find ways to settle arguments without fists or weapons.
6. Set up a teen court, in which youths serve as judge, prosecutor, jury, and defense counsel. Courts can hear cases, make findings, and impose sentences, or they may establish sentences in cases where teens plead guilty. Teens feel more involved in the process than in an adult-run juvenile justice system.
7. Become a peer counselor, working with classmates who need support and help with problems.
8. Mentor a younger student. As a role model and friend, you can make it easier for a younger person to adjust to school and ask for help.
9. Start a school crime watch. Consider including a student patrol that helps keep an eye on corridors, parking lots, and groups, and a way for students to report concerns anonymously.
10. Ask each student activity or club to adopt an anti-violence theme. The newspaper could run how-to stories on violence prevention; the art club could illustrate the costs of violence. Career clubs could investigate how violence affects their occupational goals. Sports teams could address ways to reduce violence that's not part of the game plan.
11. Welcome new students and help them feel at home in your school. Introduce them to other students. Get to know at least one student unfamiliar to you each week.
12. Start (or sign up for) a "peace pledge" campaign, in which students promise to settle disagreements without violence, to reject weapons, and to work toward a safe campus for all. Try for 100 percent participation.