



# Early and Imminent Warning Signs for School Violence

Reminders for Teachers and Other School Staff

## Principles for Identifying the Early Warning Signs of School Violence

- Develop caring, supportive relationships with students
- Do no harm – don't enflame the situation
- Understand violence and aggression within a context
- Avoid stereotypes such as race, socioeconomic status, academic ability, appearance
- View warning signs within a developmental context
- Understand that children typically exhibit multiple signs (do not over react to one sole sign)

**Early Warning Signs:** When observing a child's behavior it is imperative that the examiner look for multiple signs and consider the appropriate context. The signs must be presented in combination and indicate a need for further analysis to determine the appropriate intervention.

- Social withdrawal
- Excessive feelings of isolation and being alone
- Excessive feelings of rejection
- Being a victim of violence
- Feelings of being picked on and persecuted
- Low school interest and poor academic performance
- Expression of violence in writings and drawings
- Uncontrolled anger
- Patterns of impulsive and chronic hitting, intimidating and bullying behaviors
- History of discipline problems
- Past history of violent and aggressive behavior
- Intolerance for differences and prejudicial attitudes
- Drug use and alcohol use
- Affiliation with gangs
- Inappropriate access to, possession of, and use of firearms
- Serious threats of violence

**Imminent Warning Signs:** Indicate a student is very close or has a very high potential of being violent. Usually these signs are apparent to both staff and parents. When these signs are evident safety is the first and foremost consideration.

- Serious physical fighting with peers or family members
- Severe destruction of property
- Severe rage for seemingly minor reasons
- Detailed threats of lethal violence
- Possession and/or use of firearms and other weapons
- Other self-injurious behaviors or threats of suicide

**ALWAYS REPORT WARNING SIGNS TO AN ADMINISTRATOR AND ALSO TO THE STUDENT'S COUNSELOR, PSYCHOLOGIST OR SOCIAL WORKER.** This can be done via phone, email, verbally, or anonymously through Colorado's Safe2Tell line.

Source: Center for the Study of Violence Prevention, U.S. Secret Service

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