



School Safety and Crisis Response Committee

Greetings NCSPA Membership,

Many of us had difficulty falling asleep last night thinking about the horrific events in Uvalde, Texas. We imagine many of you experienced the same sleeplessness. This senseless act of violence, that has left a community shattered and countless lives forever changed, weighs on our hearts and fills our prayers. We want you to know that the North Carolina School Psychology Association wants to ensure we share resources and timely information to support you during times of crisis.

To that end, we wanted to take this opportunity to make you aware of safety initiatives and guidelines that we encourage schools to have in place to protect students. School safety strategies include, but are not limited to:

- Coordination and emergency planning with Law Enforcement, Emergency Management Services (EMS), Fire & Rescue, Emergency Responders, and safety officials, and the Department of Health and Human Services and Health Department
- Development of extensive “Crisis Plans” for each school, updated annually and including evacuation sites, shelter-in-place details and parent communication plans
- The creation of crisis management and intervention teams in all schools
- Secured entrances at schools
- Visitor identification badges
- Monthly safety drills conducted during the school year, including lockdown and intruder drills
- Security and camera supports throughout the district
- Ongoing safety training for employees
- Staff members designated to assist special needs students in an emergency/crisis
- Emergency “Go” kits in every school ready in the event of an emergency
- Memorandums of Understanding for safety and supports with Law Enforcement and school safety partners
- School Resource Officers present in our schools daily to support safety of our students, staff, and families
- Access to Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP: School Psychologists, School Counselors, Behavioral Health Specialists, School Social Workers, and School Nurses) to support the overall wellbeing of our students

NCSPA has provided a district example of messaging and communication to reaffirm safety and support for students, families, and staff. Please see the link here for a district example provided by Dr. Stephanie Ellis in Rockingham County Schools: <https://bit.ly/RCS-School-Safety-Letter-05-25-22>

NCSPA also encourages The **PREPaRE** School Safety and Crisis Preparedness curriculum that has been developed by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) as part of NASP's decade-long leadership in providing evidence-based resources and consultation related to school crisis prevention and response. **PREPaRE** training is ideal for schools committed to improving and strengthening their school safety and crisis management plans and emergency response.

As we review our safety and security practices to determine if more can be done, we encourage parents to assist schools and school districts in also reviewing their own emergency plans. By working together, we can do more to protect our students.

What Can Parents/Guardians Do:

- Be sure that updated emergency contact information is on file in your child's school. This is particularly important if you have had a change in phone numbers.
- Be sure the school has the current information about your child's caregiver/guardian.
- Listen to your children and take their concerns seriously. If they "see something," have them "say something." If they overhear or observe (whether at school, an after-school event, or on social media) a student or former student threatening harm to themselves or others, please immediately report that information to law enforcement or a trusted adult.
- Monitor your child's social media activity and report anything suspicious. In some school shootings, the suspect's social media accounts foreshadowed violent events.
- When you are in our schools or at school events, be alert for individuals who do not belong. Report that information immediately to the school office or an administrator.
- Instruct your child about how to reach you at all times.
- Be sure your child knows what to do and where to go if there is an emergency and no one is at home.
- Talk to your child about personal safety. Teach your child how to recognize danger signals.

Resources:

We hope the following resources will be helpful as you address the sadness and fear that your child (ren) may be feeling following yesterday's tragic shooting. This National Association of School Psychologists website provides tips on how to provide children with a sense of normalcy and security after high profile violent acts. Please see these resources here:

- [National Association of School Psychologists School Safety and Crisis Resource List](#)
- [Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers](#)
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network (<http://www.nctsn.org/>) provides additional resources and tips that you may find helpful.
- [NC Center for Safer Schools Website Page](#)
- [NCDPI Social Emotional Learning and Supports Website Page](#)
- [North Carolina School Psychologist Association Webpage](#)

Our state has wonderful and well-trained School Resource Officers and Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP Staff: School Psychologists, School Counselors, Behavioral Health Specialists, School Social Workers, and School Nurses) who are also available to help students who may have anxiety or concern about what they have viewed on the news or social media regarding the Texas incident. SISP personnel are critical to the functioning of schools and to overall psychological and physical safety!

Going forward, NCSPA pledges to you to continue to remain dedicated in our efforts to protect students and staff of North Carolina. We earnestly believe that a safe and secure school climate must precede and support a healthy learning environment.

Respectfully and with Warm Regards,

NCSPA School Safety and Crisis Response Committee