



DENVER
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

Student Equity and Opportunity
Success in School, Success in Life

Supporting Students in
Response to School
Shootings

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to communicate our commitment to safe and welcoming schools and to provide building leaders and staff with resources to address the recent acts of violence within our communities.

DPS is a Safe and Welcoming School District

The recent school shooting may have a significant impact on our students, families and staff members. We also recognize our students and adults are experiencing added stress in response to the global pandemic and racial unrest, and we anticipate such events may cause an increase in feelings of anxiety and stress in our community. In turn, we want to ensure staff, students and families are supported during this time. We are committed to being a [Safe and Welcoming School District](#) for all students and families.

Talking to Students about Racism and Recent Events

Reach out to your building level school psychologist, counselor or social worker to support you in discussions with students who may be experiencing stress/anxiety caused by this event. Below are additional resources:

- ❑ [The Role of Caring Adults after a School or Community Tragedy](#)
- ❑ [Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers](#) (English/Other Language Downloads)
- ❑ [Supporting Marginalized Students in Stressful Times: Tips for Educators](#) (English only)
- ❑ [Supporting Vulnerable Students in Stressful Times: Tips for Parents](#) (English only)
- ❑ [Countering Coronavirus Stigma and Racism: Tips for Teachers and Other Educators](#)
- ❑ [School Violence Prevention: Guidelines for Administrators and Crisis Teams](#) (English only)

DPS strives to create affirming and inclusive learning and working environments. If you are in need of translation to support your community needs, please reach out to [DPS Multilingual Communications Department](#).

Student Needs

The impact of community violence on youth can result in educational, psychological, physical, and social repercussions. Youth responses can manifest as feelings of anxiety and fear. It is important for staff to support youth using trauma-informed practices with intent on strengthening protective

factors. Staff are encouraged to access the trauma-informed resources available to support responses.

- ❑ [DPS's Trauma-Informed Practices 101 Module](#)
- ❑ Reach out to Jay Grimm or Marccus Spearman for more information

If the impact appears to impact the day to day functioning of students, it may be helpful to share additional resources with families. This may include your school-based health care clinics or a community resources such as those below:

- ❑ [Colorado Crisis Services](#) offers multiple walk-in centers around the Denver-metro area and access to a free and confidential Crisis Textline at 1-844-493-8255.
- ❑ [Mental Health Center of Denver](#) provides information on the history of AAPI Racism and offers resources for students and families.
- ❑ If guardians need additional support or assistance in accessing any of these resources, they can reach out to their school psychologist, counselor or social worker. Additional assistance may be accessed by contacting the Family and Community Helpline at 720-423-3054 or FACEHelpline@dpsk12.org.
- ❑ [Gang Reduction Initiative of Denver \(GRID\) resources for students dealing with gang involvement](#)
- ❑ [Safe2Tell Colorado](#) anonymously report any concerning behaviors or tips through Safe2Tell Colorado (text , online, phone)

Family Supports

It is important for families to talk with their children about events within their community. We know that students may explore their curiosity by turning on the TV or rewatching events on social media. Unfortunately, the frequent exposure of such events can result in trauma and continued feelings of anxiety and fear. Opportunities to limit such exposure is recommended alongside guided discussions using a safe and supportive approach.

When approached with questions from youth, adults should answer questions honestly and revisit strategies for how to navigate unsafe events. This may include discussing a family's emergency disaster plan or devising one. This discussion can help equip youth with a sense of comfort and control. Additional resource handouts to support parents are provided below.

- ❑ [Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers](#) (English/Other Language Downloads)
- ❑ [Talking to Children about Violence: Multilingual Tips for Parents and Teachers](#) (multiple languages)
- ❑ [Managing Strong Emotional Reactions to Traumatic Events: Tips for Families and Teachers](#) (English only)
- ❑ [Helping Your Children Manage Distress in the Aftermath of a Shooting](#) (Spanish version)

- ❑ [Parent Guidelines for Helping Youth after the Recent Shooting \(Spanish version\)](#)

Support for Staff

Staff may experience feelings of anxiety and fear in response to community violence. Staff are encouraged to access their support systems that help them navigate the uncertainty associated with such tragedy. When events occur within a school community or in close proximity, it is important to provide an opportunity to process and plan response in collaboration with our District Crisis Response Team (DCRT). Those resources can be accessed by calling Meghan Kimball or Ellen Kelty at 720-468-8364.

Additional resources include:

- ❑ [Managing Your Distress in the Aftermath of a Shooting \(Spanish version\)](#)
- ❑ [DPS Employee Assistance Program](#) (includes access to free, confidential counseling for DPS employees and members of their household)
- ❑ [Colorado Crisis Services](#) offers multiple walk-in centers around the Denver-metro area and access to a free and confidential Crisis Textline at 1-844-493-8255.