



TEACHER BEHAVIOR – TIPS AND IDEAS FOR KEEPING TEACHERS SAFE IN SCHOOL



In many instances today, teachers are confronted with situations that were unheard of just a few years ago. Teacher training may help you learn how to write a curriculum or channel a child's energy into learning, but it gives little to no instruction on dealing with that energy if it turns violent. Here are a few tips to help you stay safe and keep your classroom a safe place as well.

First and foremost, always trust your gut instincts.

We all have those times in our lives where we wish we would have listened to the little voice in our head alerting us to something being not quite right. A situation may appear normal but something lurks below the surface. Better to investigate and listen to that little voice then have regrets later. Use good judgment at all times and keep yourself safe so that you can help protect your students.

Stay alert and listen carefully to the undercurrent of whispers and mutterings that flow through your students and the school.

Violent confrontations and fights are often talked about before they happen, regardless of the cause. Word of fights are often spread through the student body to attract a large crowd to watch and only add to the aggression of the situation. It's also the nature of young people to talk about challenges students throw around among each other. When you can listen to the flow of gossip through the school, you can be one step ahead to prevent student violence before it starts.



Talk to your students and develop a relationship with them.

If a young person knows that you care about them, they will be more likely to trust you and come to you if they need help or a situation arises. As an authority figure, you can stand for the positive in their lives and be a friend and comfort to them if they need it. Aggression often arises from frustration or hurt feelings. That escalation can be prevented if the student has a chance to talk it out.

Keep the school administration in the loop.

While it may be tempting to play the Indiana Jones figure and swoop in to save the day, it's foolish to try and diffuse any dangerous situation alone. Talk to your principal or superintendent. Alert them to what you've heard and ask for help in preventing any additional problems. The buddy system helps to keep you safe and have more than one authority figure around to help you

diffuse aggression. The school administration will also help to alert the proper authorities if needed and keep all paperwork straight for repeat offenders.

Classroom safety is very important as the students become your responsibility when they are in your class.

An option for reducing the risk of classroom violence is requiring book bags and backpacks be kept in lockers and only allowing the necessary notebooks and texts. While this seems like overkill, it's all too easy for a student to hide a prohibited substance or weapon in a book bag and cause trouble in your classroom. Enforce any school dress code in your classroom as well. Some schools have taken steps against weapons in schools by restricting the type and style of clothing worn to prevent items being smuggled in under baggy clothes.



You may not think you'll ever see a gun or weapon in your classroom but once you do, your thoughts should turn from prevention to negotiation.

Remain calm and collected. Don't panic, overreact or try to approach the student. Ask them if you can talk to them privately. Tell the remainder of the class to collect their things and go study in the library. Notify the principal's office if at all possible. If the armed student becomes aggressive or agitated, tell the rest of your class to remain silently in their seats. Prevent any other student from speaking out against the aggressor at all costs.

Sit calmly at your desk and ask the armed student if they will lower the weapon and talk to you.

Under no circumstances should you try and approach the student. Keep your distance and put as much furniture between you and the student as possible. If the situation escalates, keep calm. Tell your students to lay on the floor or get behind something and stay put. Always speak in a controlled and quiet manner. If law enforcement arrive, let them take over. They have more training for these kind of situations and are specialized in diffusing potential hostage situations.

While extreme examples of safety in the classroom, staying calm, using good judgement and listening to your students are all excellent skills to bring together in your "teacher tool-bag." Good prevention will reduce the chance you'll ever be in a tragic situation

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