

There are early warning signs in most cases of violence to self and others, certain behavioral and emotional signs that, when viewed in context, can signal a troubled student. P3 Campus is an information gathering tool which allows for students to make adults aware of needs unmet. It is up to these adults to recognize early warning signs and provide the help the student desperately needs and wants.

However, this does not absolve the responsibility of teachers and staff to be observant of the behaviors and feelings of students. It is paramount students are listened to and help is provided. The US Department of Education details warning signs that a student is struggling or may become violent. Excerpts from this report are included below.

Psychologists emphasize several important principles to observe when early warning signs appear evident: (1) do no harm—early warning signs should not be used as a rationale to exclude, isolate, or punish a student; (2) understand violence and aggression within a context—there may be many antecedent factors, in the home and/or school, for students at risk of committing violent acts; (3) avoid stereotypes—it is important to be aware of false cues, including race, socioeconomic status, learning difficulties, or physical appearance; (4) view warning signs within a developmental context—know what is developmentally appropriate behavior so that supposed warning signs are not misinterpreted; (5) understand that students typically exhibit multiple warning signs—research confirms that most students at risk of aggression exhibit more than one warning sign repeatedly and with increasing intensity over time.

A good rule of thumb is to assume that warning signs, especially when exhibited in combination, indicate a need for further analysis to determine an appropriate intervention for the student. Though P3 Campus you can track trends and see all reports made for a particular student to determine the best course of action. P3 Campus gathers all information on a trend and/or student so everyone can see the whole picture to eliminate gaps in information. Below is a list of early warning signs that should be addressed:

- **Social withdrawal.** Withdrawal often stems from feelings of depression, rejection, persecution, unworthiness, and lack of confidence.
- **Excessive feelings of isolation.** The majority of students who appear isolated or friendless are not violent and may be in need of other types of specialized help. However, research also shows that such feelings can be associated with violent behavior and should not be ignored.
- **Excessive feelings of rejection.** Some aggressive students who are rejected by nonaggressive peers may seek out aggressive friends who, in turn, reinforce violent tendencies.
- **Being a victim of violence.** Research shows that students who have been victimized by others are sometimes at risk of becoming violent toward themselves or others.
- **Feelings of being picked on or persecuted.** Students who feel constantly teased, bullied, singled out for ridicule, or humiliated at home or school may, if not given adequate support, vent their emotions in possible aggressive behavior.
- **Low school interest and poor academic performance.** In some situations, such as those in which the low-achiever feels frustrated, unworthy, chastised, and denigrated at home or at school, acting out behavior in aggressive ways may occur. It is important to assess the emotional and cognitive reasons behind poor performance in school to determine the true nature of the problem.

- **Expression of violence in writings and drawings.** Many students express themselves through drawings, stories, diaries, journals, poetry, and other expressive forms. Most are essentially harmless. However, an overrepresentation of violence that is focused on depictions of family members, peers, teachers, administrators, or others consistently over time may signal emotional problems and potential violence.
- **Uncontrolled anger.** Everyone gets angry. It's a basic human emotion. However, anger that is expressed frequently and intensely in response to minor irritants may signal potential violent behavior toward self or others.
- **Patterns of impulsive and chronic hitting, intimidating, and bullying behavior.** Students often engage in acts of shoving and mild aggression. However, some mildly aggressive behaviors, such as constant hitting or bullying of others, if left unattended, may escalate into more serious problems.
- **History of discipline problems.** Students with a history of chronic behavior problems both in school and at home indicate unmet needs. These problems may set the stage for more deliberate violations of norms and rules, defiance of authority, disengagement from school, and involvement in aggressive behavior directed toward peers and adults.
- **Past history of violent and aggressive behavior.** Unless provided with emotional support and professional help, students who have previously committed violent or aggressive acts are at significant risk of repeating such behavior. Prior aggressive behavior may have been directed at persons or expressed through cruelty to animals, firesetting, lying, vandalism, or other antisocial acts. Research suggests that age of onset may be a key factor in interpreting early warning signs. Students who engage in aggression and drug abuse at an early age—before age twelve—are more likely to show violence later on than are students who begin such behavior at a later age. In the presence of such signs it is important to review the student's history with behavioral experts and to seek parents' observations and insights in planning help.
- **Drug and alcohol use.** Apart from being unhealthy behaviors, drug use and alcohol use reduce self-control and expose students to violence, as perpetrators, as victims, or both.
- **Affiliation with gangs.** Gangs that support antisocial values and behaviors, including extortion, intimidation, and acts of violence toward other students, cause fear and stress among other students. Youth who are influenced by gangs, who emulate their behavior and values, as well as those who actually join a gang, may act in violent and aggressive ways in certain situations. Gang-related violence and turf battles are common occurrences in some communities and often lead to injury and death, frequently including innocent victims.
- **Inappropriate access to, possession of, and use of firearms.** Families can reduce inappropriate access to and use of firearms by their children through careful monitoring and supervision. Students with a history of aggressive, impulsive, or other emotional problems should not have access to firearms or other weapons.

Having a good relationship already established between the school district, school community, and law enforcement ensures all parties will handle reports promptly and appropriately, preventing escalating behaviors.

Physical aggression, destruction of property, rage, detailed threats of lethal behavior, possession of firearms and other weapons, or self-injurious behaviors or threats of suicide are each sufficient cause for immediate action by law enforcement with followup with the school and families.