



Poway Unified School District - School Safety Community Forum FAQs

Thank you for submitting your questions regarding school safety and security. Below are the answers to the most frequently asked questions, divided into four categories: Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery.

Prevention

- **Can the school district enact confidential reporting for troubled students/weapons on campus?**

Yes, there is a new confidential tip line for PUSD schools that is monitored by law enforcement: **844-PUSD-TIP**. If it is an emergency please dial 9-1-1.

Student safety and mental health concerns can still be reported to PUSD's internal hotline as well: 858-668-4161.

- **Are all PUSD staff (especially yard supervisors) required to wear their name badges?**

Yes, all PUSD staff are required to wear their identification badges.

- **What can parents do at home to better support the schools with respect to school safety, in times of crisis, and to prevent/reduce the frequency of events?**

Parental engagement is the number one factor in student success and safety. We need your partnership to keep our schools safe: secure your weapons at home, check your students backpack, keep an eye on their social media, have conversations with them. If you see something, say something. Keep your contact information up to date at your school, and limit the spread of rumors or unconfirmed information on social media when a situation is happening. Also, acknowledge your children's fears or worries and then reference the work done by the schools and the district to keep everyone safe.

- **What can we as parents be doing to make it legal to publicize the consequences/punishments for certain incidents (as a deterrent) while still masking the identity of any minor(s) involved?**

San Diego County District Attorney Summer Stephan offered this advice: Even if you think your child would never be the type to make a threat, have a conversation with them about the serious consequences of making threats. These are crimes taken very seriously by law enforcement and punishable by jail time. The D.A.'s office reported that all recent school threat cases were eventually solved by investigators and perpetrators were held accountable.

- **Will police presence on school campuses increase? Hours? Frequency? Everyday?**

Though not every day at all campuses, both our sheriff and police department partners have already increased staffing devoted to schools.

- **Will school staff be armed?**

No. Aside from law enforcement, both California Education Code and Penal Code prevent firearms on campus.

- **Do school sites need metal detectors?**

This is not currently being considered. It is neither practical for the number of students we have at each school site, nor is it highly effective at preventing weapons from getting onto campus, according to law enforcement.

- **Can schools check students backpacks?**

Backpack searches are illegal to conduct without cause; randomly searching them is considered a violation of students' civil rights.

- **What safety precautions are in place at school sites? (e.g. entryways, classrooms, school gates, etc.)**

The tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary directly led to numerous changes throughout our District. One of the first steps taken was to bring together a committee of first responders and District administrators, to review our current practices and discuss potential changes in protocols. Out of those meetings came the need to walk and complete a security assessment for each of our 39 campuses, which directly led to numerous changes throughout our district. These include:

- The Installation of an automated Visitor Check in System at all sites
- Campus gates closed and locked after school starts, and remain closed throughout the day
- Darkening window film tint on windows without blinds
- Classroom doors changed to lock from inside instead of outside
- Panic bars installed on main ingress and egress gates
- Fencing improvements on numerous campuses throughout the district

- **What safety upgrades are provided for older campuses throughout the district that have unfenced classroom door access?**

In 2013, PUSD conducted the aforementioned facility security assessment, which included an audit of procedures and practices and recommendations of safety measures. Phase One was completed in 2014, which included fencing, gates, and locks. It is clear that a new security assessment audit needs to be conducted and we are currently addressing that.

- **Is there money allocated in PUSD's budget for safety enhancements or improvements?**

Yes, we have over \$5 million dollars set aside to address school safety needs across the District.

- **Is it possible to leave the lights on later on high school campuses to help prevent crime?**

Yes, we have begun re-programming the lights to stay on longer at sites, but we also need to be mindful of city ordinances and our neighbors.

- **Can parents or the community donate money to schools to support and put in place additional safety measures (like lock blocks)?**

Yes, we welcome that, you could either donate to the PUSD District Foundation or your site-based foundation to designate that money for security and safety, and then staff would work with the principal and school to make sure the equipment is aligned to District standards.

- **What is the protocol for visitors at school sites?**

All visitors enter through the main office, sign in to Help Counter, receive a badge showing their picture and where on campus they are going. These badges are to be worn on the chest and clearly visible.

- **What steps do schools take to intervene with students who may be showing crisis signs and/or troubling behavior?**

Counselors and Student Services Specialists (at the High School level) work with the student to assess the degree of help or support needed. If appropriate, the school counselor will work with the student or family and student may be referred to the Caring Connections Center. Depending on the individual's situation a referral to outside agencies for parents may be advised to seek additional resource from outside agencies.

- **Should we be looking at morning procedures where gates are open and access to the school grounds is open to anyone?**

Yes, the District is considering enforcing closed campus policies at morning drop off to make our schools more secure.

- **Are Bridge/ESS entrances routinely monitored or locked? Can parents have a key fob or secure code to access?**

ESS/Bridge entrances are monitored. About half of our schools have an entrance from the parking lot area which goes directly into the ESS door. The other half of our schools have an entrance where parents/students go into the school gates and the ESS building is behind those school gates. With entrance to the ESS room, there is an adult monitoring the adults who come and go into the room through unlocked doors. After school, the school leaves the gates unlocked so that parents can pick up their children from ESS. We are currently trying out a pin pad entry at Valley Elementary where the ESS door is right off of the parking lot. With the pin pad entry, doors are locked and parents open the ESS door with a 4 digit code. If this product works well, we would like to expand usage to other schools that have this same door configuration. We are also working with our PUSD maintenance dept. right now on looking at a product where we could use a pin pad entry code to unlock a school gate for after school usage. We haven't solved this gate access issue yet but we are diligently looking for good options and products.

- **What programs that prevent bullying is the district looking to implement?**

Currently we have Second Step; Social and Bullying Prevention Components, Character Counts, No Place For Hate, Community of Kindness, Stepping Up, Rachel's Challenge and several other programs. Please visit your student's school to see what they have on their campus.

- **Has the district looked into prevention programs (Sandy Hook Prevention Plan, Safe School Flagship - Southwestern High School in Shelbyville, Indiana)?**

Yes, we have reviewed both of the above mentioned.

- **What protocols or preventative measures are in place to support students after being suspended or expelled?**

We are required by Ed Code to provide Other Means of Correction prior to and in conjunction with suspensions for most offenses. Common Other Means of Correction include:

- Restorative Justice Practices
- Caring Connection Referrals
- Counseling
- Student Services Support

Every expulsion or suspended expulsion also includes a Rehabilitation Plan.

These plans mandate certain interventions depending on the offence. Common Rehabilitation Plan interventions are:

- Therapy
- Behavior Classes
- Caring Connections
- Drug Tests, Drug Classes
- Interviews with police officers

- **Are all surveillance and or camera systems updated and maintained at all school sites including elementary?**

Providing our schools with state of the art surveillance systems is a top priority for PUSD. We are assessing our current surveillance equipment to determine needs and logistics. The cost to outfit a single school site with a complete surveillance system, including cameras, cabling, servers and accompanying software, averages between \$50,000 and \$70,000. In order to meet these expenses, we are working with the San Diego County Office of Education on potential grants, specifically for replacing and updating school video surveillance systems. At the same time, we are looking for alternate ways and additional grants to secure funding to ensure that we have networked, working surveillance systems. Internally, we are exploring ways to use funding sources to purchase and update surveillance systems.

- **With the support of parents messaging the “see something, say something” motto/message to their students home, can the district reinforce the message to all PUSD staff and students too?**

We have been getting the message out to staff, students, parents and community members, through various methods, Principal's newsletters, PUSD website, on campus posters, and face to face conversations..

- **Are current drill practices coordinated with the local police to prepare for active shooters?**

Yes, Law enforcement works collaboratively with PUSD in updating and refining all emergency protocols.

- **Why are regular active shooter drills with local sheriffs not conducted?**

Law enforcement does not want the students to know the tactical procedures they will utilize in the event of a real situation.

- **What supports are in place to ensure staff feel safe and equipped to deal with students who may be at risk?**

PUSD has counselors and student services support staff on campus to assist teachers and professional growth opportunities on this topic are available for staff either at PUSD or San Diego County Office of Education throughout the year. Additionally, PUSD has Behavioral Specialists available to assist.

- **Has the district considered holding an annual assembly or meeting for the students to attend, mandatory, where law enforcement and perhaps the D.A. comes in and talks about the ramifications of making threats of school violence, bringing weapons on to campus, etc.?**

At each level we look at the optimal way to get an important message out to our students. An all school assembly is not always the best option in reaching our students with an important message. All school lessons that take place in smaller settings where students can ask questions and participate in a discussion around the topic have proven to be more effective. As a district we are discussing how we can do that at each of our levels moving forward.

Preparedness

- **Are all open access points opened to the public monitored during drop off hours?**

Open access points should be monitored by school staff during drop off and pick up hours.

- **How can teachers protect students and themselves when bullets can go through windows and wall?**

Students are taught to take cover away from the windows and hide out of the site line to prevent them from being hit by glass and or bullets.

- **What is the safety or lockdown plan the district is looking to implement in the case that there is a shooting on a school campus?**

PUSD currently does have a plan in place for active shooter, that is a tactical response and not available for public viewing. However, we are in the process of implementing option based responses into that plan to align with law enforcement responses..

- **Will there be bleeding control training for those staff working on school campuses?**

There are currently trainings available at the County office of education for bleeding control. Attendance at this training is up to individual sites.

- **Can schools encourage meditation?**

Stress Management support groups are available through both counseling and student services at the high school level. Some sites are implementing “wellness minutes” during class time.

- **What types of trainings occur with school staff to ensure they are prepared to handle any active shooter situation?**

Active Shooter Trainings are initially presented to principals and administrative staff at the district level. The trainings for site staff will take place at the site either by trained District staff or law enforcement.

- **How can we keep special needs kids safe if some of them have difficulties remaining silent or still during a lockdown?**

The teachers and staff working with students in special education have received the same training as other staff in PUSD. In addition, teachers working with children with special needs are specifically trained to work with students in special education and understand the unique needs to student's sensory, communication, and behavioral needs during stressful situations. Staff are prepared to utilize the supports necessary based on the individual's needs.

- **How many staff, including those trained to assist students with special needs, are visible and available to students during recess/lunch?**

Individual school sites determine staffing, based on the number of students participating in recess and/or lunch, to ensure a safe environment for all children. The students in special education are included in the number; however a student's individual education plan may dictate specific needs, which are then covered at appropriate levels (for multiple situations).

- **Can there be more education for all parents about students with special needs to increase compassion and empathy?**

This is a great idea and already occurring at many school sites.

- **What steps are taken by the district to ensure staff understanding of procedures?**

All Sites have a Tabletop exercises manual of scenarios that are to be used at the sites for training.

- **Can we start implementing the "Know the Signs" Sandy Hook program on school campuses?**

We currently have staff trained on every campus in identification of social emotional issues or behaviors in students needing assistance.

- **If my kids participate in the national school walkout on March 14, how will this be supported and used as a teaching moment at all levels in the district?**

Our goal is to provide a safe, neutral environment that honors student voice and action, as we balance our efforts and responsibilities to uphold district attendance policies, school safety and the First Amendment Rights of our students and staff. Students who want to participate will not be penalized academically for participating, however if a student elects to leave campus and does not return, PUSD Board policies regarding absences and/or trancies will be implemented. We realize that not all of our students want to anticipate and we want to honor their wishes as well.

- **My daughter's classroom opens up to outside of the school campus, what type of prevention will be put in place to ensure no one can simply enter the room?**

PUSD is currently assessing the need for a new facilities audit to identify and correct these kind of issues. In the meantime all doors that open outside of a fence line are to be locked at all times.

Response

- **How does the district and/or police department determine whether a threat is credible or not credible?**

Through thorough investigation and threat assessments, however, we are unable to share any specific information, at the request of law enforcement.

- **Can we postpone or cancel school until after law enforcement does a full investigation into whether a threat is not credible?**

We cannot cancel school every time we receive a threat, which would only increase the number of threats we receive. The goal for many threats is to disrupt school. If law enforcement were to have concerns a threat is credible, we would respond appropriately. If they deem that the threat is not credible, there is no need to cancel school.

- **What if there is an emergency at an athletic event?**

The CIF requires us to have plans in place for emergencies. Many large events also have staff in attendance who are trained in emergencies as well as officers for added security on scene.

- **To ease fear and anxiety and to combat the spread of false information, can administrators communicate or interface with parent Facebook groups?**

School administrators are often too busy handling the safety of staff and students to monitor social media during an incident. We encourage Facebook page administrators to follow official District social media (@PowayUnified) for the latest posts and when in doubt, reach out to the school before posting unconfirmed information. Please help us combat the spread of rumors, think before you post.

- **How does the media find out about certain events before parents and staff are notified by the school?**

Media are constantly monitoring scanner and law enforcement radio traffic as well as social media. In addition, many media members are parents in our community and receive texts from their neighbors or children, just like you do.

- **What happens in a lockdown drill?**

- Direct students in from hallway or corridors and into classroom
- Lock all doors
- Close & Lock Windows
- Close Blinds, or Cover Windows
- Turn Off Lights
- Silence all Electronic Devices
- Remain Silent
- Hide away from door and windows

- Remain in place until released by School Administration or evacuated by law enforcement
- **How will lockdown procedures be changed from “staying where you are” to “exiting as quickly as possible”?**
PUSD is currently working on implementing Options Based Responses (“Run, Hide, Fight”) to Active Shooters as another option in the event of an incident.
- **How will I be reunited with my child after an emergency?**
The reunification process is part of all School Safety Plans. Please keep in mind, the fluid nature of an emergency situation and the process may have to change. Students may be moved to another school site within PUSD or another location outside of PUSD. Look for the communication from PUSD which will direct you to the site where the reunification process will begin. Parents MUST bring a photo I.D. to pick up their child.

Recovery

- **What emotional support resources are available to staff and students after something happens at a school?**
The Crisis Response Team (CRT) is composed of district personnel and community members trained in the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) model of crisis intervention. Every school and several district departments have members on the Team to advise and assist in the aftermath of a critical incident.
- **How can the district improve better and timely communication to parents?**
The safety of the students and staff at a school site will always be a priority. The need to know does not supersede the need for safety. That said, we understand parents desire to receive an official communication from the school or District. We also have an obligation to provide accurate information so as not to spread panic or misinformation. Once it is safe to do so, we will work with law enforcement to confirm information before sending out any official communications.
- **Can the district implement a text messaging system?**
Yes, this is in the works for Fall 2018. Look for a mass notification opt-in form in your registration packet. Please opt in to receive emergency text messages from PUSD.
- **Can the school or District communicate the disciplinary measures taken against students who make threats? Can the District issue an explanation to parents once the investigation is complete?**

We are unable to share specific disciplinary measures that we take with students, due to student confidentiality laws. However, know that there are two different processes when a student makes a threat: criminal through law enforcement and the District Attorney and through the school and School District. Both will ensure the maximum punishment. Once the

investigation is complete, the school can send a follow up communication or debrief meeting if necessary.

- **What age-appropriate resources exist to talk to children about safety and tragedies?**

Please visit our Student Support Services safety information page:

<https://powayusd.com/en-US/Departments/Student-Support-Services/Safety/Safety-Information>

- **How can the district/school site expedite the communication of emergencies to other schools so that office staff can respond to concerned parents appropriately?**

When necessary or when an incident is affecting multiple sites, the District will communicate that information to the principals and office staff of other schools.

- **How many counselors are at each site to support students with emotional needs?**

- High School - 4 full time at each site (plus 1-28 hr/wk. Student Services Specialist)
- 2 full time counselors at each middle school
- A minimum of 2 days of counseling at every elementary. Larger elementary schools have 3 days of counseling
- Abraxas - 1 Counselor
- CTAE - 2 Counselors

- **Who is monitoring the various websites that students are visiting while at school?**

District-issued devices and PUSD wireless networks prevent access to inappropriate websites. However, we cannot monitor what students do on their own personal devices. Parents can install monitoring software on their children's devices.

- **Are the back fences at schools going to be changed so that they are not attached to private residences?**

We have some families that have cut PUSD fences and installed gates right into their backyards. These have been identified in schools' vulnerability checklists. Our Facilities department is looking at options to better secure these access points.