

Sample Letter or Email to Schools and Youth Organizations

Dear [insert the name of your school principal or youth organization director],

I am/we are [a parent/community member/neighbor] and I am/we are asking you to join me/us in preventing gun violence – and all forms of violence – before it happens in our community.

Sandy Hook Promise's *Know the Signs* programs help prevent gun violence (and other forms of violence and self harm) *BEFORE* it happens by teaching adults and youth how to recognize the signs and signals of individuals who may be at-risk of hurting themselves or others and intervene to get them help. Sandy Hook Promise's *Know the Signs* programs are offered at no cost to schools and youth organizations and include:

Say Something: Say Something teaches youth, grades 6 – 12, how to recognize signs and signals, especially within social media, of an individual who may be a threat to themselves or others and Say Something to a trusted adult *BEFORE* a tragedy takes place. Say Something is an evidence-informed program developed in collaboration with leading violence prevention researchers and educators. The Say Something program can be digitally downloaded and self-led at no cost, or depending on the size of your school, training can also be delivered in-person by Sandy Hook Promise.

Start With Hello: Start With Hello teaches youth, grades 2 – 12, how to be more inclusive and connected to one another. Start With Hello works to create connectedness and sustain an inclusive culture and community, by minimizing social isolation, marginalization and rejection, *BEFORE* an individual chooses to hurt themselves or others. Start With Hello is an evidence-informed program developed in collaboration with educators and leading violence prevention researchers. Start With Hello can be digitally downloaded and self-led at no cost, or depending on the size of your school, training can also be delivered in-person by Sandy Hook Promise.

Safety Assessment & Intervention: Safety Assessment & Intervention teaches core multidisciplinary teams within a school district how to identify, assess and respond to threats of violence or at-risk behavior *BEFORE* a tragedy takes place. Safety Assessment & Intervention not only addresses the threat itself, but also helps identify and treat the underlying problem in that youth's life that led to him or her to make the threat. Safety Assessment & Intervention was developed by Dr. Dewey Cornell at the University of Virginia and is an evidence-based program. Training is delivered in-person only and can be provided at no cost to school districts with more than 10 schools.

Signs of Suicide: Signs of Suicide uses an educational curriculum to teach students to recognize the symptoms of depression and suicide. Signs of Suicide can be implemented by existing school personnel within one class period. The program includes a mental health self-assessment that screens every student for depression and suicide. The

program also includes training and educational materials for faculty, staff and parents. At its core, the Signs of Suicide Prevention Program relies on three easy-to-remember steps, denoted by the acronym ACT:

- **Acknowledge** that you are seeing warning signs and that it is serious
- **Care** let your friend know how much you care about them
- **Tell** a trusted adult that you are worried about your friend

More information on each of these programs can be found at www.sandyhookpromise.org/prevention_programs. You can also email programs@sandyhookpromise.org to learn more.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please let me/us know which *Know the Signs* program(s) might be a good fit for [insert name of school/youth organization] and how I/we as [a parent/community member/neighbor] can help bring one of these programs to [insert name of school/youth organization].

Thank you,

[Insert full name(s), email(s) and phone number(s)]

Who is Sandy Hook Promise?

Sandy Hook Promise (SHP) is a national, nonprofit organization based in Newtown, Connecticut. We are led by several family members whose loved ones were killed in the tragic mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School on December 14, 2012 that claimed the lives of 20 first-graders and 6 educators.

Sandy Hook Promise is focused on preventing gun violence (and all violence) before it happens. SHP does this by educating and mobilizing parents, schools and communities on mental health and wellness programs that identify, intervene and help at-risk individuals.

SHP is a moderate, above-the-politics organization. Our intent is to honor all victims of gun violence by turning our tragedy into a moment of transformation. For more information on Sandy Hook Promise, please visit: www.sandyhookpromise.org