

Guidance from the National Association of School Psychologists

For early elementary students - In the case that younger students have been introduced to the events taking place, please remember they need brief, simple information that should be balanced with reassurances that their school and homes are safe and that adults are there to protect them. Give simple examples of safety like community helpers are working hard in our community to keep us safe, reminding children about exterior doors being locked, active adult monitoring will be taking place at school, etc.

Upper elementary and early middle school children will be more vocal in asking questions about whether they truly are safe and what is being done at their school. They may need assistance separating reality from fantasy. Discuss efforts of school and community leaders to provide safe schools. Refrain from sharing graphic details, but do provide facts to the best of your ability when children ask questions. Saying, "I don't know" is also an okay response when you are unsure of the facts.

Upper middle school students will have strong and varying opinions about the events taking place. Emphasize that adults are responsible for keeping students safe but that they can have a role in making safe decisions, as well (e.g., not providing building or home access to strangers, reporting strangers on campus, communicating any personal safety concerns at school to administrators, informing parents/guardians of suspicious activity in their local community, and accessing support for their mental health needs.