

SSID

Defining School Violence

To assist in the effort to purge violence from U.S. schools, it is important to understand exactly what school violence is and what is included when discussing school violence. Several definitions of school violence have been published recently. The following definitions are a representative sample of the predominant thoughts concerning school violence.

Any intentional actions taken while on school property to physically harm or threaten people are defined as school violence. (Encyclopedia of Social Issues)

Any deliberate act, serving no legitimate purpose, which causes injury or which could reasonably be expected to cause injury to another person. To be considered reportable, the conduct should be either intentional or reckless in nature. (Basic Education Circular on Safe Schools, 1996)

School Violence may be defined as any school-related activity that produces a victim. (School Violence Resource Center)



School violence can be manifested in a variety of behaviors. These behaviors may differ depending on an assortment of factors including the ages of the school violence offender and victim. Using age as an example, violent behavior for young elementary school children primarily consists of aggressive behaviors such as kicking, hitting, spitting, or name-calling. As children grow older, behavior becomes more serious, characterized by bullying, extortion, and physical fighting. Aggressive or violent adolescents may engage in assault against other students and staff, sexual harassment, gang activity, or weapon carrying.

SAFE SCHOOLS INITIATIVE DIVISION, 7723 Col. Glenn Road, Little Rock, AR 72204

This project is supported by Grant Number 2000-DD-VX-0026, awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Dept. of Justice.