SCHOOL SAFETY
PLAINLY

FOR STAFF & PARENTS

TALKING WITH KIDS ABOUT SCARY NEWS

When something frightening happens at a school somewhere, kids hear about it fast.

FIVE STEPS

START HERE

- **Ask what they've already heard.** Their worries may be different from yours.
- **Answer simply and truthfully,** matched to their age (or developmental level).
- **Point out the adults and plans** that keep them safe, and what drills are for.
- **Keep routines steady:** bedtimes, meals, school.
- **Turn off the news** and put phones down when kids are around.

FOR YOUNGER KIDS

YOU CAN SAY

> "Something scary happened at a school far from here. The grown-ups at your school practice plans to keep you safe, and I'm always here to talk about it."

IF IT LASTS

GET HELP

- **Some changes are normal for a while:** trouble sleeping, stomachaches, clinginess.
- **If they last more than a few weeks,** talk with your pediatrician or school counselor.
- **Call or text 988** if a child or teen talks about wanting to hurt themselves.

Avoid promising that nothing bad could ever happen. Say instead that many adults are working to keep them safe.

In an emergency, call 911 first.

Free to copy and share for school and family use.