

# GANG FREE



# IN KANSAS

*It's **YOUR** Choice.*

## Gang Awareness Week Prevention Toolkit

October 10-14, 2016

*Brought to you by:*

**Gang Free Kansas**  
GangFree.KS.gov



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# **Toolkit Guide**

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# Why should I care about gangs?

Although gangs are not new to our society, they continue to present significant problems that need our attention. Even though there are those who may not believe there is a concern with gangs in our schools, recent statistics do not agree. A gang presence in schools can cause:

- Increased likelihood of death or incarceration
- Dangerous conflict between rivals at school and school events
- Increase in vandalism/graffiti
- Increase in drug crimes
- School disruption
- Family disruption
- Increase in weapon crimes
- Increased fear for safety from other students



Gangs engage in a variety of crimes including human trafficking, the sale of illicit drugs, weapons trafficking, and prostitution as well as white-collar crimes such as counterfeiting, identity theft, and mortgage fraud. Gangs continue to adapt and change. They use technology and social media to facilitate their criminal activities, to connect with other gang members and to recruit new members.

**Failing to adequately address gang problems can lead to increased risk of victimization in the school setting for both students and staff members.**

*It is assumed that more police or tougher legislation alone will counter gangs; however, research and experience both suggest that a comprehensive approach will be more successful.*

**Prevention and intervention involves everyone!**

# The Cost of Gangs

Gang violence is costly for the future of our youth in a variety of ways:

- High risk of injury or death
- Involvement in criminal activity which often result in a criminal record and/or incarceration
- Limits future opportunities
- Dropout rates increase
- Withdrawal from family and other friends
- Drug trafficking/weapons involvement
- Lose opportunity for education and employment
- Risk your own family's life
- Endless amounts of threats, assaults and drive-by shootings
- Costs to remove graffiti and repair vandalism
- Often results in early parenthood and unstable employment
- Young people who become gang members are an economic burden to society:
  - Costs of prosecution and incarceration
  - Cost of probation and parole



## Gang Violence Statistics

*According to the 2011 National Gang Threat Assessment, gangs are responsible for an average of 48 percent of violent crime in most jurisdictions and up to 90 percent in several others. Major cities and suburban areas experience the most gang-related violence. Local neighborhood-based gangs and drug crews pose the most significant criminal threat in most communities.*

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in the Department of Justice offers a National Youth Gang Survey. Some of the results from the 2011 survey include the following gang statistics:

- Half of the law enforcement agencies reported a 48% increase in non-lethal gang related crime. There was a 51% increase in gang-related property crime
- 21.1% of suburban counties report gang activity
- 31.6% of smaller cities report gang activity
- From 2007 to 2011, there were more than 1,900 gang related homicides



# Kansas State Statutes

Several Kansas State statutes address gangs. They provide a legal definition for what constitutes a gang and enhanced sentencing guidelines for identified gang members committing crimes for the gang. For the full text of each of these statutes go to [www.kslegislature.org](http://www.kslegislature.org).

## **K.S.A. 21-6313. Criminal street gangs; definitions**

This statute defines:

1. What constitutes a gang
2. Who is considered a gang member
3. What is considered gang activity
4. Who is considered a gang associate

## **K.S.A. 21-6314. Recruiting criminal street gang membership**

This statute defines recruiting for gang membership. It also establishes the severity level for the crime of recruiting gang members.

## **K.S.A. 21-6315. Criminal street gang intimidation**

This statute defines gang intimidation as the communication, directly or indirectly, with another:

1. any threat of personal injury or actual personal injury to another
2. any threat of damage or actual damage to property of another with the intent to deter such person from assisting a criminal street gang member or associate to withdraw from such criminal street gang; or punish or retaliate against such person for having withdrawn from a criminal street gang.

## **K.S.A 21-6316. Criminal street gang member; bail; exceptions**

Statute defines bail costs for gang related crimes specifically stating that when a criminal street gang member is arrested for a person felony, bail shall be at least \$50,000 cash or surety, unless the court determines on the record that the defendant is not likely to reoffend, an appropriate intensive pre-trial supervision program is available and the defendant agrees to comply with the mandate of such pre-trial supervision.





## Risk and Protective Factors

For many years, researchers have been studying the factors that seem to increase or decrease a youth's risk to join gangs. Risk factors are things that encourage or increase the likelihood of a youth participating in gangs; whereas protective factors are things that act as a shield in the presence of risk factors.

Examples of risk factors that affect a youth's chance for gang-involvement	Examples of protective factors that decrease the likelihood of gang involvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low levels of parental involvement</li> <li>• Academic failure</li> <li>• Lack of school connectedness</li> <li>• Truancy and school dropout</li> <li>• Poverty</li> <li>• Substance use (e.g. illicit drugs and alcohol)</li> <li>• Availability of drugs and firearms</li> <li>• Exposure to violence and racial prejudice</li> <li>• Friends who engage in gang behavior</li> <li>• Favorable attitudes toward gang behavior</li> <li>• Early initiation of gang behavior</li> <li>• Family conflict</li> <li>• Low neighborhood attachment and community disorganization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for pro-social involvement</li> <li>• Rewards/recognition for pro-social involvement</li> <li>• Healthy beliefs and clear standards for behavior</li> <li>• Positive sense of self</li> <li>• Bonding</li> <li>• High parental expectations</li> <li>• A sense of basic trust</li> <li>• Rewards/recognition for pro-social involvement</li> <li>• Caring and support from teachers and staff</li> <li>• Opportunities for participation as active members of the community</li> <li>• Decreasing accessibility to illicit drugs and alcohol</li> <li>• Cultural norms that set high expectations for youth</li> <li>• Social networks and support systems within the community</li> </ul>

[www.findyouthinfo.gov/youth-topics/preventing-gang-involvement](http://www.findyouthinfo.gov/youth-topics/preventing-gang-involvement)

**Prevention programs that target risk factors and promote protective factors can help reduce youth gang involvement.**

# FAQs about Gangs for TEACHERS to know:

(visit [GangFree.KS.gov](http://GangFree.KS.gov) to learn more)



**What is a gang?** A gang is a formal or informal ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons who share a common name or common identifying signs who engage in illegal activities.



**Who joins a gang?** Gangs can include people of every gender, race, culture and socioeconomic group. Most gang members tend to be adolescents or young adults, however, recent trends indicate that children are being recruited into gangs at a much earlier age, some when they are in elementary school.



**Why would someone join a gang?** Youth join gangs for a variety of reasons:

- To gain a sense of belonging
- To gain respect or recognition
- Protection or safety
- For power or excitement



**How will I know if my student is in a gang?** You might not always know, but there are a number of ways gang members represent their gang. The most common ways include through clothing, shoelaces, belts/belt buckles, bandanas, rubber bands, hats/caps, and tattoos. Gang members don't always wear specific colors. Keep in mind, gang style dress is part of pop culture, so not every person wearing all of a certain color is a gang member.



**Don't most gang members come from poor neighborhoods in large cities?** No. Gangs come from all socio-economic levels, from all ethnicities and from communities, large and small.



**Where can I see examples of gang symbols and things to watch for?**

Visit [GangFree.KS.gov](http://GangFree.KS.gov) to obtain additional resources and watch the video highlighting the most common gang tattoos in our state. New information is added to this website frequently.



**How do I report possible gang activity?** Work with your school administration to notify your local law enforcement agency.



# Tips for Teachers

1. Establish simple and clear rules for behavior in the classroom. List those rules along with possible consequences and enforce them consistently in a calm, low-key manner. Gang members need structure in the classroom setting and must be disciplined for negative or disruptive behaviors. Maintain vigilance over the slightest signs of “disrespect,” stare-downs, and challenges.
2. Watch for the use of gang hand signs, symbols, colors, or language. Do not allow gang-type graffiti to be displayed on notebooks, papers, homework assignments, or school property. Report graffiti discovered on desks or other school property to the school administrator. Graffiti should be documented, photographed, shared with local law enforcement, and removed immediately.
3. Develop rapport with gang-involved students. Rapport is a critical factor in both prevention and intervention. If a gang-involved student can connect with the adult in the classroom, they may come to see the teacher as a role model.
4. Talk to gang-involved youth about their aspirations and hopes or about informal matters such as favorite sports teams. These informal discussions show students that teachers do care for them in and out of the classroom, and this facilitates rapport and bonding.
5. Discipline gang-involved students by quietly asking them to remain after class to discuss rule violations. Adults should ensure that a gang-involved student does not have his associates with him during discussions. This model of discipline has been found to work best when dealing with gang-involved students.
6. Regularly invite parents to talk with you about their student’s progress and any concerns they have. Send home notes celebrating student’s achievements.
7. Encourage and sponsor student-led-anti-violence activities and programs ranging from peer education to teen courts to mediation to mentoring to training.
8. Incorporate discussion on violence and its prevention into the subject matter you teach, whenever possible.
9. Encourage students to report crimes or activities that make them suspicious.







# It's YOUR Choice

## Info for Students

It's important for you to understand that the benefits you are promised and may think you will achieve do not accurately reflect the reality of the gang life.

The gang life includes:

- High risk of permanent injury or death
- High risk of your being arrested, incarcerated and having a criminal record
- A significant limit to your future opportunities
- High risk of your dropping out of school
- Withdrawal from family and other friends
- Becoming involved in drug and weapon trafficking
- A loss of opportunity for education and employment
- Risking your own family's life
- Endless amounts of threats, assaults and drive-by shootings
- Often results in early parenthood and unstable employment



Choose to be gang free. It is YOUR Choice.

- Tell the truth to parents and adults about activities. If you want trust and respect, then you must earn it. Remember that adults and your parents make mistakes too.
- Keep your family informed about your activities and friends.
- Don't pretend to be a gang member. It could get you killed.
- Report any crimes or suspicious actions to the police, school authorities and parents. Be willing to testify.
- If someone tries to pressure you into joining a gang, say no, get away and tell a trusted adult.
- Don't use alcohol or drugs and stay away from places and people associated with alcohol or drugs.
- Get involved to make school safer and better. Counsel peers and settle disputes peacefully.
- Help younger children learn to avoid being crime victims. Set a good example, and volunteer to help with community efforts to stop crime.

### ***Helping a friend***

- Don't try to do it alone. You need help from people who specialize in gang issues.
- Tell your friend how you feel. It's okay to say that you're concerned for them, their safety and their future.
- Don't get involved with gang activities with your friend.
- Talk to your SRO or contact your community's anonymous tip line.

*A lot of youth think that gang culture is cool. Don't be tempted to try out gang slang, clothes or signs. This can be very dangerous, potentially deadly.*

**GangFree.KS.gov**



# Gang-Free Pledge



I, \_\_\_\_\_ **pledge** to not use bad language, and respect myself, my body, my friends, my teachers, my family, and people who are different from me. I pledge not to smoke, use drugs, or drink alcohol.

**I pledge** not to lie, cheat, steal, join gangs, or get into fights.

**I promise** to talk to my family before I decide to do anything that might be dangerous, illegal or unsafe. I will **not** hang around gangs, attend gang parties, talk to gang members, or act like a gang member. I will not throw up hand signs, or use gang slang that could put me in danger. I will avoid gang colors and dress.

**I will** not tag or have anything to do with graffiti anywhere, including on my personal belongings, at home, at school, or in my community. I know graffiti and tagging is disrespectful to my community and illegal.

**I will** use a computer, video games, cell phone and other types of media with respect. I won't do bad things with technology like bully other kids. I will stay away from gang websites and I won't ask gang members to be my "friend" on social networking websites. I will listen carefully to music lyrics, and avoid songs or videos that hype up gang life, "gangstas," celebrate violence, or disrespect others.

**I will** choose friends who make good choices. I will let my family know who all my friends are and where they live. I will ask advice if my friends ask me to do something I am uncomfortable with or that I think is wrong. I will tell my family, or other trusted adult, if I get asked to join a gang.

**I will** do my best to fix any problems that I have peacefully and I will ask my parents, teachers, police officers, or other trusted adults for help.

**I will** choose family, school, and community over gangs.

My signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# FAQs about Gangs for PARENTS to know:

(visit [GangFree.KS.gov](http://GangFree.KS.gov) to learn more)

**?** **What is a gang?** A gang is a formal or informal ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons who share a common name or common identifying signs who engage in illegal activities.

**?** **My child wouldn't join a gang, would they?** Gangs can include people of every gender, race, culture and socioeconomic group. Most gang members tend to be adolescents or young adults, however, recent trends indicate that children are being recruited into gangs at a much earlier age, some when they are in elementary school.

**?** **Why would my son or daughter join a gang?** Youth join gangs for a variety of reasons:

- To gain a sense of belonging
- To gain respect or recognition
- Protection or safety
- For power or excitement

**?** **How will I know if my child is in a gang?** You might not always know, but there are a number of ways gang members represent their gang. The most common ways include through clothing, shoelaces, belts/belt buckles, bandanas, rubber bands, hats/caps, and tattoos. Gang members don't always wear specific colors. Keep in mind, gang style dress is part of pop culture, so not every person wearing all of a certain color is a gang member.

**?** **Don't most gang members come from poor neighborhoods in large cities?** No. Gangs come from all socio-economic levels, from all ethnicities and from communities, large and small.

**?** **Where can I see examples of gang symbols and things to watch for?**

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**?** **How do I report possible gang activity?** Contact your local law enforcement agency.

## Tips for Parents

1. Talk daily with your child and listen to your child.
2. Watch for the use of gang hand signs, symbols, colors, or language.
3. Ask about unexplained injuries, such as burns or marks.
4. Notice negative changes in behavior and ask questions.
5. Watch for graffiti to be displayed on notebooks, papers, homework assignments, or on their hands/arms.
6. Observe unexplained cash or expensive possessions that you did not provide.
7. Regularly talk to your child's teacher about any concerns you have.
8. Get to know your child's friends (and their parents).
9. Stay involved in your child's life.
10. Know where your child is and what he or she will be doing.
11. Keep them busy - especially between 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
12. Promote activities such as sports, clubs and community service projects.
13. Recognize the warning signs indicating your child may already be involved in gang activity, and don't ignore them – get help.
14. Know your child's user names and passwords for Social Media sites. Pay attention to what they are looking at, what music they are listening to, who they are talking to and what they are posting.
15. Remember that gang involvement doesn't happen overnight. You need to stay alert and watch for any signs so they can be addressed early before they escalate.
16. Let your child know you love and care about him or her.

Parents are critical to keeping kids out of gangs.  
Prevention and intervention involves everyone!



# Parent/Guardian Gang-Free Pledge

I pledge to help you and your school, your activities,  
and your choices as you grow up.

I will talk with you and will not turn you away or make fun of you  
when you ask for help.

I promise to be involved in your life at all times, and to care about  
where you go and whom you hang out with.

I will do my best to provide you with a safe and happy home,  
even when times are hard.

I will do everything I can to keep you safe from gangs and gang activity.

I will try to be a good example for you, and point out when  
you make good choices.

I promise to **love** you no matter what.

Parent/Caregiver: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Caregiver: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Additional Resources**

**FBI 2015 National Gang Report** – [fbi.gov/file-repository/national-gang-report-2015.pdf/view](http://fbi.gov/file-repository/national-gang-report-2015.pdf/view)

**FBI: Gangs** – [fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/vc\\_majorthefts/gangs/gangs](http://fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/vc_majorthefts/gangs/gangs)

**Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention** – [ojjdp.gov](http://ojjdp.gov)

**Bureau of Justice Assistance** – [bja.gov](http://bja.gov)

**National Crime Prevention Council** – [ncpc.org](http://ncpc.org)

**Kansas Legislature** – [kslegislature.org](http://kslegislature.org)

**Kansas Safe Schools Resource Center** – [community.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=3878](http://community.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=3878)

**National Gang Center** – [nationalgangcenter.gov](http://nationalgangcenter.gov)

**Gang Free Kansas** – [GangFree.KS.gov](http://GangFree.KS.gov)

**Gang Free Wichita** – [gangfreewichita.org](http://gangfreewichita.org)

# A Proclamation

- ~ WHEREAS gang membership is growing, with one out of every 200 Americans belonging to a gang
- ~ WHEREAS gangs contribute to high rates of crime, particularly homicides
- ~ WHEREAS gang violence destroys our neighborhoods
- ~ WHEREAS the drug trade flourishes when gangs are present
- ~ WHEREAS gangs may be fronts for organized crime
- ~ WHEREAS gang violence harms everyone, especially children, who are frequently caught in the crossfire between gangs
- ~ WHEREAS children at risk for joining gangs can be identified at young ages
- ~ WHEREAS education and intervention at an early age can reduce gang involvement
- ~ WHEREAS proven strategies exist for combating gang membership and the spread of gangs
- ~ WHEREAS community programs and partnerships between all levels of government have been highly successful in reducing gang violence



***Now, therefore, I (name of leader, title) do hereby proclaim October 10-14, 2016 as Gang Awareness Week {or October 2016 as Crime Prevention Month} in (name of jurisdiction) and urge all citizens, government agencies, public and private institutions, and businesses to invest in the power of prevention and work together to save lives and reduce the role and spread of gangs so that (name of jurisdiction) is a safer, stronger, more caring community where children can grow up safe and healthy; where schools are safe; where crime is reduced; where lives are reclaimed from gang membership; and where businesses and neighborhoods can thrive.***