Date

Dear [school district] families,

Last school year, the nation witnessed two national tragedies in St. Louis, Missouri and Nashville, Tennessee. Student safety remains our priority at (district). We want to continue to provide a safe learning environment and resources to help our parents, teachers, students, and staff be successful.

This school year, our school district (will begin participating/continue to participate) in a statewide school safety program called Safe2Help Illinois. This program will offer students a safe and confidential way to share information that may help prevent suicides, bullying, school violence, and other threats to student safety. The program also includes a social emotional learning toolkit aimed at fostering a culture of kindness and provides self-help resources for students and parents to help reinforce the program concepts.

Safe2Help Illinois features a 24/7 helpline (1-844-4-SAFEIL), text line (SAFE2), free mobile app, and dedicated website (www.Safe2Helpil.com). In the absence of a trusted adult, students can use Safe2Help Illinois to share concerns about themselves or others in a confidential environment. Once vetted, the information will be immediately shared with local school officials, 911 call centers/Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) depending on the nature of the information. It is important to note that this program is not intended to punish, suspend, or expel students. Rather, the intent is to encourage students to “seek help before harm,” with the goal of intervening and helping students before they harm themselves or others.

The most common reports received by Safe2Help Illinois in the 2022-2023 school year have been bullying and threats of suicide. This sobering information underscores the importance of making sure our students have the resources they need in times of need. While we understand these topics may be hard to approach, we encourage parents to promote open lines of communication with their students. Safe2Help Illinois offers a variety of resources on their website which may make it easier to approach these hard-to-have conversations.

We also believe Safe2Help Illinois has the potential to be effective in preventing acts of school violence. Over the last 15 years, in almost every case of a mass school shooting in the U.S. committed by a student, after action reports indicate at least one other student knew something might happen but did not come forward for a variety of reasons.

[final paragraph on what to expect next, or what parents are being asked to do?]

Sincerely,

[superintendent’s name and school district]