

Gangs:



not my kid,
not my town



TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 211

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS OF EXCELLENCE



If you require assistance while visiting a District 211 school, please contact the principal's office.

For individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, please access the following TTD/TTY telephone number: (847) 755-6654.

Why this brochure?

Youth gang problems are proliferating across the United States, even in small cities and towns. The presence of gangs is virtually a national phenomenon. Over 40 street gangs have been identified in the Chicago and suburban area, with a combined membership of approximately 30,000. Community members and multijurisdictional agencies must work together to keep gangs out and preserve quality communities and healthy living standards. To this end, High School District 211 joins local community groups and police in their efforts to increase awareness as well as educate parents, students and residents about gang activity.

Please read this brochure, then share what you learn with others so that gang activity is recognized quickly and reported to authorities. Parents, schools, police, local governments, business leaders and community groups must work together to keep communities safe and desirable places to live.

What is a gang?

Legally, a gang is an organized group involved in criminal activity. The group exhibits independence, disrespect for established authority and lack of conventional morality. Substance abuse is often involved. School-related gang activity may include intimidation, display of gang symbols or colors, hazing (harassment), graffiti, vandalism and theft.

Why teens get involved with gangs

- Status, recognition or identity
- Low self-esteem
- Poor communication at home
- Breakdown of family
- Need for acceptance or belonging
- Lack of success in school
- Lack of involvement in activities or sports
- Perceived or real need for protection
- Peer pressure from gang members
- Attraction to criminal activity and fast money

Questions parents ask most ...

Are gangs in suburban Cook County in High School District 211 communities?

Yes, the suburban Cook County areas have seen evidence of gang activity. Gang graffiti and related activity is a growing problem in the communities served by High School District 211. The northwest suburban area of Cook County qualifies for the federal government's definition of a region with a gang problem, as we have dealt with gang activity for more than 10 years.

What kind of teens join gangs?

Students from grade six and older have been known to join gangs. Students with older siblings who are gang members are prime candidates. Gangs recruit from all ethnic groups. Some are born into gangs as a result of neighborhood tradition and/or their parents' participation in gang and criminal activity.

Are girls involved in gangs?

Yes. Most gangs have female counterparts, usually the girlfriends of gang members. Female involvement may be increasing proportionally with male gang involvement.

Why should we be concerned?

Gang activity is a threat to all of us and directly affects the quality of life throughout our community. Gang presence means criminal activity — drug trafficking and theft from homes and businesses, for example. We must be concerned because a hard-core gang member will allow gang ties to become stronger than ties to family, school, church and community. In high school, the presence of gangs becomes a safety issue. Schools strive to provide a safe learning environment, without fear of intimidation. To eliminate gang activity in High School District 211 communities, it is important that schools, parents, police and residents take an active stand to combat it.

What High School District 211 is doing about gangs ...

- Teachers, administrators and counselors encourage students to get involved in the more than 70 positive activities and sports at each school.
- Positive self-esteem activities, peer counseling, psychologists and social workers at each school help students with personal or school-related problems.
- School Cultural Awareness committees explore the different ethnic and racial backgrounds of members and share these experiences in a positive way with other students.
- Teachers and counselors are available to help students improve their academic or school success. After-school help and tutoring is available.
- Parent Booster Clubs and Principals' Advisory Groups keep the lines of communication open between parents and school.
- High school faculty and staff are trained to notice gangs, identifiers, colors, symbols and behaviors.
- District-wide policies prohibit students from wearing gang colors, recruiting, intimidating others or demonstrating other gang activity.
- To deter trespassers, students are required to wear student identification cards on campus.
- Adult supervisors are assigned to school entrances to watch for unauthorized people who may try to enter the building.
- Each school has a police consultant who, among other duties, assists the school with information regarding gang activity. He is a sworn police officer with the local police department.
- School administrators, counselors and police consultants are available to answer parents' questions about gangs and gang activity.
- District 211 has formal information sharing agreements with the juvenile justice system, social service agencies and police departments concerning students who commit criminal acts.

Suburban Gang Identifiers

While some gangs operate independently, most area gangs have historically been grouped into two major alliances or "nations," People and Folks. All gangs affiliated with the People are generally allied with each other and rivals to all gangs in the Folk nation. The converse also is true. Although the growth and prominence of various gangs fluctuate, the most prominent gangs in the suburban Cook County area are listed below, along with "identifiers" that they have been known to display. Gang "colors," that is clothing colors and accessories, also change. Individuals who consistently show more than one identifier may be involved in a gang. The use of hand signals and graffiti also are means by which gangs communicate their allegiance and mark their turf.

	People	West Coast	Folks
	Latin Kings	Surenos	Gangster Disciples
	Vice Lords		4 Corner Hustlers
Alliance ...	People	None	Folks
Colors.....	Gold & Black	Blue	Blue & Black
Slogan	"All is well"	"Mi Vida Loca" or "My crazy Life"	"All is one"
Initials	LK or ALKN	Sur or Sur 13	GD or BOS
Earrings ...	Left ear	Right ear	Right ear
Gloves.....	Left hand	Right hand	Right hand
Hats	Tilted to left	Tilted to right	Tilted to right
Symbols... 3- or 5-pointed star; crown	5-pointed star; cane; hat; Playboy bunny; martini glass	13; M; XIII; X3; Sur	6-pointed star; pitchfork; hearts with horns
			Black Diamond; bunny with bow tie; \$; dice

How do I know if my teenager is involved in gang activity?

Sometimes gang members deny their involvement because the gang is supposed to be secretive. Look for an increase in your student's standard of living — sudden money or new possessions. Look for unfamiliar graffiti or initials on personal belongings such as notebooks or jackets. Watch for the teen to wear the same color combinations often; check to see if more than one friend also wears these colors. Most recently, tatoos and jackets from professional sports teams are popular with gangs. Also be aware that copying gang identifiers (see chart) in front of true gang members could be dangerous.

What parents can do

- Show an interest in your children — their friends, activities and whereabouts at night and after school. Enforce curfews.
- Monitor your teen's computer use and communications using social media sites, such as Facebook.
- Help prevent boredom by planning constructive activities for teens. Schools, community groups and churches offer many such opportunities.
- Get involved with your school's Booster Club and your teen's activities. Volunteer your time at school, community or church-sponsored activities that provide recreational alternatives to gang involvement.
- Help keep awareness high — share what you know about gangs with others so that gang activities are more recognized in our communities and reported to authorities.
- Sit down with your teenagers and tell them about gangs. Share this brochure with them.
- Confront your teen if you suspect gang involvement and seek help. If you notice several identifiable signs, call the Youth Division of your local police department (see listing). A strong parental stand against gangs will help deter teens from gang activity.
- Search your teen's room if you suspect gang involvement. Look for gang symbols, drugs and weapons. *What may seem like an invasion of privacy may save your teen's life and future.*
- Contact school officials or police to report gang graffiti or any rumors of gang activity.
- Encourage and support school policies that work to eradicate gang-related activity — *even if it relates to your own teenager.*

Need more information?

Please contact the police consultant, assistant principal, or counselor at the high school in your attendance area:

Palatine High School
(847) 755-1600

William Fremd High School
(847) 755-2600

James B. Conant High School
(847) 755-3600

Schaumburg High School
(847) 755-4600

Hoffman Estates High School
(847) 755-5600

Police Departments with Youth Divisions

Arlington Heights	(847) 368-5347
Elk Grove Village	(847) 364-2684
Hanover Park.....	(630) 372-4400
Hoffman Estates	(847) 882-1818
Inverness	(847) 381-2141
Palatine	(847) 359-9001
Rolling Meadows	(847) 255-2416
Roselle.....	(630) 980-2025
Schaumburg	(847) 882-3586
South Barrington	(847) 381-7511
Streamwood	(630) 837-0953

For more information:

Palatine High School

1111 N. Rohlwing Road • Palatine 60074-3777

(847) 755-1600

phs.d211.org

William Fremd High School

1000 S. Quentin Road • Palatine 60067-7018

(847) 755-2600

fhs.d211.org

James B. Conant High School

700 E. Cougar Trail • Hoffman Estates 60169-3659

(847) 755-3600

chs.d211.org

Schaumburg High School

1100 W. Schaumburg Rd. • Schaumburg 60194-4150

(847) 755-4600

shs.d211.org

Hoffman Estates High School

1100 W. Higgins Road • Hoffman Estates 60169-4050

(847) 755-5600

hehs.d211.org

G.A. McElroy Administration Center

1750 S. Roselle Road • Palatine 60067-7336

(847) 755-6600

adc.d211.org



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*Extraordinary Opportunities. Innovative Teaching.
Exceptional Learning.*

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