MODEL POLICY #24

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION OF ACTS OR THREATS OF VIOLENCE

Why Adopt This Policy?

Parents want to know what is happening in their children's' schools, particularly when it comes to school safety. This policy creates a system of when and how to notify parents of acts or threats of violence at the school and ensures trust between families and the District. This policy is not intended to scare parents—in fact, not knowing about an act or threat of violence and hearing about it later creates strife between families and the District.

Policy

The School District is committed to the prevention of violence against any individual or property in the schools and on school property whether such acts or threats of violence are made by students, staff, or third parties. This policy is established to ensure effective communication between the school district and parents in the event of acts or threats of violence.

For purposes of this policy, acts or threats of violence include the following:

1. **Physical violence:** Any use of force that imminently threaten or results in bodily injury or harm to others, such as hitting, punching, kicking, pushing, or any other form of physical aggression.
2. **Verbal or written threats of violence:** Any spoken, written, or electronic communication that conveys an intention to cause harm or engage in violent actions against individuals or property.
3. **Social media:** Any social media post or communication directly involving the district or members of the school community that conveys an intent to cause harm or engage in violent actions against individuals or property.
4. **Possession or use of weapons:** Any possession or use of weapons, such as firearms, knives, or other device designed as a weapon and capable of producing death or great bodily harm, with the intent to cause harm or intimidate individuals in the school community.
5. **Vandalism and property destruction:** Any act or damage to school property with the intent to convey a threat or cause intimidation or harm amongst the school community.

The school district shall maintain a comprehensive safety plan to evaluate and respond to threats, potential threats, or concerning behaviors that could impact the safety of the school community. A copy of the threat assessment policy shall be provided to students, parents, and all district personnel at least once per year at the beginning of the school year and as required by applicable law.

Notification Requirements:

School personnel will provide timely notice to students and school personnel who are subjects of individually directed acts or threats of violence. Parents of students who are subjects of individually-directed acts or threats of violence will also be provided timely notice. If the act or threat is by a student, information will be shared with parents of students directly affected, but personally identifiable student information will be kept confidential in compliance with applicable state and federal laws.

School personnel will provide timely notice to students, parents and school personnel, in the event of a building directed act or threat of violence. Building-directed threats of violence include threats of violence directed against a building or school property, communicated directly or indirectly by any means, that a reasonable person would perceive to show an intent to cause damage to a school building or school property, or to harm students, employees, volunteers, community members or visitors. In exceptional cases where notifying parents could jeopardize ongoing efforts to apprehend a suspect, such notifications may be temporarily withheld to avoid tipping off the individual involved. In such instances, law enforcement's guidance and expertise will guide the decision-making process, with the paramount goal of safeguarding the well-being of all individuals within the school community.

Notifications shall be clear, factual, and designed to provide parents with essential information about the nature of the threat, actions taken, and any measure implemented to ensure the safety of the students and staff. Parental notification may be sent via email or other digital communication, written notice, phone call, in-person meetings or social media, depending on the urgency and severity of the threat. District administration shall ensure that parental notifications are issued promptly, taking into consideration the urgency of the situation and the need for accurate information dissemination.

Parents of students who are directly involved in acts or threats of violence may request access to relevant reports and videos pertaining to the incident. Upon receipt of a written request, the district administration will facilitate parental access to the requested materials in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and procedures.

The school district encourages parents to engage in discussions with their children about safety, responsible behavior, and the importance of reporting any concerns to school authorities.

For purposes of this policy, the term "parent" includes a legal guardian or other person who is legally responsible for the welfare of the child (such as grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives).

Rights under this policy transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or emancipated under state law.

Legal Analysis — National

This policy operates supplementary to other threat assessment or response policies and applicable state and federal laws and does not replace them. This policy enhances parents' rights to be notified about acts or threats of violence. FERPA gives parents access to student information, and it requires privacy protections for student records. *See* U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 C.F.R. § 99. The Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution recognizes the "inherent right" of parents to "direct the upbringing and education of children under their control." *See Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, 268 U.S. 510, 534–35 (1925).

Legal Analysis — Wisconsin

In Wisconsin, each school board is required to have in effect a school safety plan, there are requirements for school safety drills, and schools are required to have "safe and healthful facilities." *See* Wis. Stat. § 118.07; Wis. Admin. PI Chapter 8. Wisconsin law also has parental access and privacy protection laws which are in addition to FERPA. *See* Wis. Stat. § 118.125; Wis. Stat. § 118.126; Wis. Stat. § 118.127; Wis. Stat. § 938.396.

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