

Policy

VANDALISM/VIOLENCE

Vandalism

The board of education views vandalism against school property by students as reprehensible. The causes of such misbehavior often are complex, calling for careful study by parents/guardians, school staff and appropriate community officials.

The board believes that students should respect property and take pride in the schools of this district. Whenever a student has been found to have done willful and malicious damage to property of the board, the principal of the school shall notify the superintendent. The board will hold the student or his/her parents/guardians liable for the damage caused by him/her.

When vandalism is discovered, the administration is directed to take such steps as are necessary to identify the vandals. If students have taken part in the vandalism, the appropriate administrator shall:

- A. Identify the students involved;
- B. Call together persons, including the parents/guardians, needed to study the causes;
- C. Decide upon disciplinary and/or legal action possibly including suspension. Should parents/guardians fail to cooperate in the discussions, the administration may charge the student with being delinquent by a petition stating the offense and requesting appearance in juvenile court;
- D. Take any constructive actions needed to try to guard against further such student misbehavior;
- E. Seek appropriate restitution.

Violence

Physical violence including assault with or without a weapon, against another student, a staff member or board member is prohibited and will result in the disciplinary sanctions included in policies on suspension and expulsion and conduct/discipline. Disruptive behavior that is characterized by violence, even though not directed toward another person, should be reported by the classroom teacher to the school principal, unless instructed otherwise, so that possible program adjustments may be identified.

Any student who is convicted or adjudicated delinquent for possession of a firearm or a crime while armed with a firearm or found knowingly in possession of a firearm or any school property or on a school bus or at a school-sponsored function shall be immediately removed from the school's regular education program for a period of not less than one calendar year. The superintendent may modify this suspension on a case-by-case basis. Each student so removed shall be placed in an alternative educational program or on home instruction and shall be entitled to a hearing before the board.

Any school employee observing or having direct knowledge from a participant or victim of an act of violence in the district public school(s) should complete the standard report form and submit it to the school principal who is responsible for preparing the official report to the superintendent. Staff will report accurately and not falsify information.

The board shall provide ongoing staff training, in cooperation with the Department of Education, in fulfilling the reporting requirements pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:17-46.

Two times each year between September 1 and January 1 and between January 1 and June 30, the school board(s) shall hold a public hearing at which the superintendent reports to the board of education all acts of

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violence, vandalism, and harassment, intimidation, or bullying (HIB) which occurred during the previous reporting period. The report shall include the number of HIB reports in the schools, the status of all investigations, the nature of the HIB, and other data required by law.

Threats of Violence

The board is committed to promoting healthy relationships and a safe learning environment. Therefore, it shall not tolerate student threats of harm to self or others or other threatening behaviors, including threats to damage school property. Threatening behaviors shall not be tolerated on school property or at activities under the jurisdiction of the board of education.

Students shall inform a teacher, guidance counselor or principal when he/she is in possession of knowledge of such threats. Staff shall immediately notify the principal of any threat or threatening behavior that he/she has knowledge of, has witnessed or received. All such threats shall be promptly reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Students who perpetrate threatening behaviors shall be disciplined in accordance with policy and regulations on suspension and expulsion and conduct/discipline.

Unsafe School Choice Option

The superintendent shall comply with all requirements of the Unsafe School Choice Option policy adopted by the State Board of Education for schools in districts that receive funds under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. He/she shall keep the board informed of all state requirements and actions taken to implement the policy.

Particularly, if a school in the district is designated as "persistently dangerous" as defined in the policy, corrective action plans shall be prepared and presented to the board for review. The corrective action plans shall be in the format provided by the Department of Education and shall describe how the schools will reduce the number of incidents of violence as determined by the Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System (EVVRS).

Parents/Guardians shall be informed according to law and policy.

The board shall be provided with access to a copy of the current statewide Unsafe School Choice Option Policy.

School Violence Awareness Week

This school district shall observe School Violence Awareness Week, the week beginning on the third Monday in October of each year. Organized activities focused on the prevention of school violence will be offered to students, employees and board members. Local law enforcement personnel will be invited to participate.

Violence and Vandalism Reporting

The superintendent will annually submit a report utilizing the Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting system (EVVRS) accurately reporting on each incident of violence, vandalism and alcohol and other drug abuse within the school district. Any allegations of falsification of data will be reviewed by the board of education using the requirements and procedures set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.3(g). Board action shall be based on a consideration of the nature of the conduct, the circumstances under which it occurred, and the employee's prior employment record.

Implementation

The superintendent shall oversee the development of implementing regulations on all aspects of this policy, including the establishment of procedures for cooperation between school staff and law enforcement officials for all situations involving firearms or other deadly weapons.

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Key Words

Conduct, Discipline, Student Conduct, Student Conduct, Vandalism, Violence

Legal References: N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-60 et al. Disclosure of juvenile information; penalties for disclosure
N.J.S.A. 2A:53A-15 Liability of parent or guardian for willful destruction of property by infant under 18
N.J.S.A. 2C:39-5 Unlawful possession of weapons
N.J.S.A. 18A:17-46 Act of violence; report by school employee; notice of action taken; annual report,
Authority over students
N.J.S.A. 18A:25-2 School Violence Awareness Week
N.J.S.A. 18A:36-5.1 Discipline of Students
N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1 et seq.
See particularly:
N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2, -2.1
through -2.5, -3, -7
through -12
N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.8 Discipline/suspension/expulsion
N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1.1 et seq. Programs to Support Student Development
See particularly:
N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1.4, -5.1,
-5.2, -5.3, -5.5, -5.6, -5.7,
-6.1

"H.A." v. Warren Hills Regional School District, 1976 S.L.D. 336

See also Commissioners' Decisions indexed under "Students – Punishment of" in Index to N.J. School Law Decisions

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. 107-110, 20 U.S.C.A. 6301 et seq.

A Uniform State Memorandum of Agreement Between Education and Law Enforcement Officials

Unsafe School Choice Option Policy, New Jersey Department of Education, June 30, 2003

Possible

Cross References: *1120 Board of education meetings
*3250 Income from fees, fines, charges
3517 Security
*4131/4131.1 Staff Development, Inservice Education, Visitations, Conferences
4148/4238 Employee protection
*5114 Suspension and expulsion
*5119 Transfers
*5124 Reporting to parents/guardians
*5131 Conduct/discipline
*5131.1 Harassment, intimidation and bullying
5131.4 Campus disturbances
*5131.6 Drugs, alcohol, tobacco (substance abuse)
*5131.7 Weapons and dangerous instruments
*6114 Emergencies and disaster preparedness
*6172 Alternative educational programs

*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.

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