

Administrative Procedures for Weapons (Attachment for Policy No. 218.1)

Purpose

The Board of Education (“Board”) is committed to making every School District of Philadelphia (“District”) school a safe, welcoming, and healthy place. The purpose of this policy is to prohibit the possession of weapons in the school setting, as it is a threat to the safety of students and staff and is prohibited by law.

Definitions

Weapon: Any object, device, or instrument, which, in its inherent and functional purpose, is intended to be a weapon. This includes, but is not limited to, firearms, whether loaded or not; pellet or BB gun; knives; cutting instruments; nunchaku; brass knuckles; electronic shock devices; or mace and any other tool, instrument, or object used or intended to be used to inflict serious bodily injury to another.

Possession: A student is in possession of a weapon when the weapon is found on the person of the student; in the student's locker; or under the student's control while on school property, on property being used by the school, at any school function or activity, at any school event held away from the school, or while the student is traveling to or from school, including any District or public conveyance providing transportation. For the purposes of this policy, placing a weapon inside an amnesty box shall not constitute possession of a weapon.

Local law enforcement authority: a bureau, office, department or other authority of a state or local government or tribe that has jurisdiction to investigate a violation or potential violation of, or enforce, a state, local, or tribal law.

Serious Bodily Injury: bodily injury which creates a substantial risk of death or which causes serious, permanent disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily member or organ.

Procedures

The Superintendent designates the [Office of School Safety](#) as responsible for implementing and maintaining the requirements of this policy and its procedures.

In instances where student intent must be examined to determine whether an object is a weapon the [Office of School Safety](#) and the [Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), in consultation with the school, shall make the ultimate determination.

Risk Assessment

When the behavior of a student indicates a threat to the safety of the student, other students, school employees, school facilities, the community or others, school-based District staff shall

complete a risk assessment for review by the [Office of School Safety's](#) threat assessment team, in accordance with applicable law and Board policy. [1][2]

Reporting Process

The [Office of School Safety](#) shall immediately [report incidents](#) involving weapons on school property, at any school-sponsored activity or in a vehicle providing transportation to or from a school or school-sponsored activity to the Philadelphia Police Department (“PPD”), in accordance with state law and regulations, the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with law enforcement and Board policies. [1][2][3][4][5][6] In accordance with guidance from the PPD, realistic toy guns and toy pellets may be confiscated but are not considered a weapon under this policy. The PPD may be called to determine whether a suspected weapon is or is not a toy gun or toy pellet if School Safety personnel are not able to make that determination independently.

In all cases where the school has an assigned School Safety Officer (SSO):

1. The SSO will take possession of the weapon, and contact the PPD Diversion Unit.

In cases where the school does not have a SSO:

1. The school administrator and/or their designee will contact their School Safety Area Manager and the PPD.
2. The officer, upon arrival, will take possession of the weapon and contact the PPD Diversion Unit.

In all cases, once the PPD Diversion Unit has been contacted at 215-400-5526 or 215-400-6777, the Police School Diversion Protocols should be initiated:

1. The PPD Diversion Unit will determine the restorative model the student will be referred to address the criminal violation. The restorative programs will consist of, but not be limited to, the following: Department of Human Services – Preventive Services Program, Youth Court, and Restorative Circles.
2. Any subsequent weapons violations by the student after the first violation within the same school year may result in the student being arrested.

The [Office of School Safety](#) and/or a school administrator shall notify the parent/guardian of any student directly involved in an incident involving weapons as a victim or suspect immediately, as soon as practicable. The [Office of School Safety](#) shall inform the parent/guardian whether or not the PPD has been or may be notified of the incident. The [Office of School Safety](#) shall document attempts made to reach the parent/guardian. [1][2][5]

In accordance with state law, the Superintendent shall annually, by July 31, report all incidents involving possession of a weapon to the PA Department of Education on the required form. [1]

The school principal shall annually inform staff, students and parents/guardians about the Board policy prohibiting weapons and about their personal responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of the school community.

Discipline Process

Under Act 26 of the Pennsylvania School Code, students who possess a weapon on school property, or at a school sponsored event or on their way to and from school may be expelled. When determining what discipline is appropriate, the school team should review all circumstances surrounding why the student had the weapon (example: for safety traveling to school or for use at a job) and what type of weapon was found. The first question you should always ask the student is: “Why do you have this weapon?”

The PPD diversion program is meant to intervene and support students/families in order to prevent the incident from happening again. Similarly, school-based interventions are encouraged before exclusionary discipline. This [protocol](#) provides guidelines for discipline based on grade level.

Additional information regarding discipline, along with the District’s guidelines for implementing discipline can be found in [Policy 218 - Student Conduct and Discipline](#), and its related [Administrative Procedures](#).

Transfer Students

When the a student who has been expelled from a public or private school for an offense involving a weapon enrolls in the District, the District may assign that student to an alternative assignment or may provide alternative education, provided the assignment does not exceed the expulsion period.[7]

Maintenance Schedule

These administrative procedures shall be reviewed upon the review of the policy, or upon the occurrence of a triggering event.

Legal References:

1. [24 P.S. 1302.1-A](#)
2. [22 Pa. Code § 10.2](#)
3. [Policy 817](#) - Use of Scanning Equipment to Detect Weapons
4. [22 PA Code § 10.21](#)
5. [22 PA Code 10.25](#)
6. [MOU with PPD](#)
7. [Policy 233](#) - Suspension and Expulsion

Related Information:

- [School Safety Firearms on School Property Protocol](#)
- [Student Possession of a Weapon Protocol](#)