



August, 2020

Dear District 129 Parents/Guardians:

As you are aware, tragic events of violence continue to take place around our country and even here within our own city. In response, District 129 continues to enforce strategies of preparedness with our students and staff should an unsafe event occur in one of our buildings. During the school year, students practice school safety exercises including evacuation drills, severe weather drills, secure-the-building drills, and active assailant drills. Drills are always preannounced and never include any scary tactics.

To take this effort one step further, we are asking for your assistance. It is essential, regardless of whether staff and students are connecting in-person or virtually, that students demonstrate responsible decision making and self-management. Parents/guardians, as our most important partner, we ask that you reinforce the importance for your children to make good decisions and to be positive role models for those around them. We also need your help to ensure that unnecessary classroom or school disruptions don't impede all of the great opportunities that take place in District 129. When in-person learning is taking place, please regularly check the belongings your student brings with them to school (e.g., bookbags, purses, outerwear pockets, vehicles, etc.). Periodically, a student will bring a prohibited item to school in an attempt to "show off" to friends or to intimidate a peer or a school community. Unfortunately, the problems that occur from these types of incidents affect everyone in the community. During virtual learning (Zoom), it is also important to keep disruptions at a minimum and ensure your child does not have any toys or items deemed prohibited by the school's policies and procedures.

The pictures below are an example of the items that are strictly prohibited on any District 129 campus, school, or virtual learning platform, per School Board policy and as stated in our Student Rights and Responsibilities. Please see the attached links: Student Rights and Responsibilities ([English](#) / [Spanish](#)).

"West Aurora School District 129 policy strictly prohibits students from using, possessing, controlling, or transferring a weapon or any other object that can reasonably be considered, or looks like, a weapon (during in-person or virtual learning)." See Board Policy 7.190, Student Discipline.

A weapon is defined as:

1. Any gun, rifle, shotgun as defined in Section 921 of Title 18, United States Code, in Section 1.1 of the Firearm Owners Identification Act, and in Section 24-1 of the Criminal Code
2. Any other object if used or attempted to be used to cause bodily harm, including but not limited to, knives, brass knuckles, billy clubs, and razor blades
3. "Look-alikes" of any weapon as defined above

To be clear, a look-alike weapon could be anything that is made to represent a weapon. Examples of look-a-like weapons are pictured below and include, but are not limited to:

- Toy Guns
- Squirt Guns
- Pocket Knives
- BB Guns
- Razor Blades
- Ammunition
- Handmade Knives



Students must not bring any weapons or look-alike weapons to school or display them in a District 129 virtual platform.

Possession of or a display of these items will likely result in disciplinary action, including the possibility of a recommendation for expulsion. As required by the *Illinois School Code* and District policy, students who are found in violation may be expelled for at least one calendar year and up to two calendar years. A student who is expelled cannot attend any public school district within the State of Illinois during the term of expulsion. This means that parents of expelled students are left with the option of either homeschooling their student or enrolling their student in a private school.

Thank you for your cooperation in helping us maintain a safe, secure, and healthy learning environment for everyone.

Sincerely,
Marti Neahring
Director of Student Services
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