



Northshore
School District

Student Services, Activities,
Health, Student Support

Rick Ferrell, Director

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Dear Parents,

Northshore schools continue to be among the safest schools in the state. However, all of us in the community must work together to ensure that our schools remain safe. It is unfortunate that firearms and dangerous weapons threaten the safety of children and youth. To address this issue consistent with recent state and federal legislation, Northshore has adopted school board policy concerning the Regulation of Dangerous Weapons and procedures concerning weapons in the *Statement of Rights and Responsibilities Concerning Student Conduct*.

Under the law (RCW 9.41.280) *, it is a gross misdemeanor for any person (student, staff, parent or patron) to carry a firearm or dangerous weapon onto school property, including school buses, school and non-school facilities being used for school activities. It is illegal for any student or non-student under 18 years of age to have a weapon on campus, regardless of whether the weapon is in a locked vehicle and the owner has the proper permits. The law also requires that schools have signs prohibiting the presence of guns. Northshore's schools have signs stating that schools are gun and drug free zones.

It is very important that students and parents understand the consequences of violating this law and district policy. **A weapons violation may constitute grounds for immediate expulsion from the district subject to due process and the right to appeal.** If a student brings a firearm to school, legislation provides that the student be expelled from the state's public schools for one year. If a dangerous weapon other than a firearm is involved, a student may also be suspended. Objects used as a weapon or that look like weapons, such as toy guns or knives, may be treated in the same manner as real weapons. School officials must notify law enforcement of a weapons violation. Other school districts may refuse to admit students expelled for such an offense. The law and district policy is presented in the *Rights and Responsibilities Handbook Concerning Student Conduct* in the Behavioral Violations section on Weapons.

Please find an opportunity to discuss this issue with your son or daughter. Ultimately, it is the student who makes the decision whether to bring a weapon to school. Students need to understand that weapons will not be tolerated. Principals and Assistant Principals also rely heavily on students to recognize that the presence of a weapon at school is wrong. Students need to communicate to school officials about the presence of a weapon at school. Students need as much support as possible from parents, peers, and school staff to take this step.

With students, parents, school staff and our community facing this issue together, Northshore schools will remain a safe and positive learning environment.

Sincerely,

Rick Ferrell
Director of Student Services

*See subsection (3) of RCW 9.41.280 for exceptions.