

Talking Points for Students Regarding Walkouts

To be modified as needed for the age level of students being addressed.

As you know, the recent tragedy in Florida, as well as too many others, has elevated the national discussion around school violence and school safety.

In response to this, there have been several calls to action for young people to walk out of school or to participate in other activities in protest.

Please know that we are supportive of your rights to freedom of expression; however, there is also a balance to strike between honoring that right and keeping you safe and in school. There are many ways to have your voice heard, including writing to your legislator or to the local newspapers, having a discussion about your concerns, and participating in activities outside of school hours. If you do walk out, please remember that you need to remain safe, respectful, and responsible, and that you may not act in a manner that is disruptive to the school environment.

Also know that because teachers and other school staff members are public employees, they are limited in the types of activities they can engage in during work time. They can lead discussions about controversial or political topics as long as those discussions are aligned with the content area of the class and they remain neutral, but they cannot spend time helping students prepare for participation in a political activity while they are at work. If you do walk out and a teacher or other staff member accompanies you, it is for supervision purposes only.

Please remember that we have a closed campus and if you leave campus during school hours, your attendance record will reflect an unexcused absence. This absence may also generate a call to your parent or guardian.

If you are planning to participate in one of the national walkouts or another type of activity to have your voice heard, please talk to your principal in advance so they can help you think through the logistics and ensure that the activity is productive for those involved and maintains safety at all times.