

SCHOOL AND STUDENT SAFETY

The St. Mary Parish School Board is committed to providing a safe environment for the students and employees of its schools. The School Board shall take immediate action to address any potential threats of violence or terrorism to students and employees as required by the *Louisiana School and Student Safety Act* (La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §§17:409.1-17:410).

The School Board shall develop, in consultation with local law enforcement agencies, age-appropriate information regarding internet and cell phone safety and online content that is a potential threat to school safety. The information shall include how to recognize and report potential threats to school safety posted on the internet, including but not limited to social media posts. This information shall be distributed or explained to school personnel and students at the beginning of each school year, and posted on an easily accessible page of each school's website, as well as the website of the School Board. Such information shall include instruction on how to detect potential threats to school safety, visual examples of possible threats, and the process for reporting such threats.

DEFINITIONS

Risk is imminent means that the available facts, when viewed in light of surrounding circumstances, would cause a reasonable person to believe that the event stated in the threat is about to happen.

School is as defined by La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §17:236 as an institution for the teaching of children, consisting of an adequate physical plant, whether owned or leased, instructional staff members, and students, and which operates a minimum session of not less than one hundred eighty (180) days.

Student means any person registered or enrolled at a school.

Threat is credible means that the available facts, when viewed in light of surrounding circumstances, would cause a reasonable person to believe that the person communicating the threat actually intends to carry out the threat.

Threat of terrorism means communication, whether oral, visual, or written, including but not limited to electronic mail, letters, notes, social media posts, text messages, blogs, or posts on any social networking website, of any crime of violence that would reasonably cause any student, teacher, principal, or school employee to be in sustained fear for his safety, cause the evacuation of a building, or cause other serious disruption to the operation of a school.

Threat of violence means communication, whether oral, visual, or written, including but not limited to electronic mail, letters, notes, social media posts, text messages, blogs, or posts on any social networking website, of any intent to kill, maim, or cause great bodily

harm to a student, teacher, principal, or school employee on school property or at any school function.

MANDATORY REPORTING

Any administrator, teacher, counselor, bus operator, or other school employee, whether full-time or part-time, who learns of a threat of violence or threat of terrorism, whether through oral communication, written communication, or electronic communication, shall immediately report the threat to a local law enforcement agency and, if the employee is not the school administrator, to the school administrator.

Upon being informed of the threat, the school administrator shall make reasonable efforts to attempt to inform all persons who are targets of the threat and shall take all necessary measures to protect their lives and safety.

The school administrator next shall make reasonable efforts to attempt to notify the appropriate personnel within the School District administration.

The school administrator and the School District administrator then shall determine if risk is imminent for any other persons because of the threat, and if so, notify them and make reasonable efforts to attempt to take measures to protect their lives and safety.

The school administrator and the School District administrator then shall determine whether to notify parents of the students at the school.

No person shall have a cause of action against any person for any action taken or statement made in adherence with the requirement for reporting as provided herein. However, the immunity from liability provided in this policy shall not apply to any action or statement if the action or statement was maliciously, willfully, and deliberately intended to cause harm to, harass, or otherwise deceive law enforcement or school officials.

Reporting Procedures

The Superintendent shall develop and maintain administrative procedures for reporting potential threats to school safety. The reporting procedures, at a minimum, shall include:

1. A standardized form to be used by students and school personnel to report potential threats which requests, at a minimum, the following information:
 - A. Name of school, person, or group being threatened.
 - B. Name of student, individual, or group threatening violence.
 - C. Date and time the threat was made.

- D. Method by which the threat was made, including the social media outlet or website where the threat was posted, a screenshot or recording of the threat, if available, and any printed evidence of the threat.
2. A process for allowing school personnel to assist students in completing the standardized form.
3. A process for allowing reporting by an automated voice system.
4. A process for allowing anonymous reporting and for safeguarding the identity of a person who reports a threat.
5. For every threat reported, a school administrator shall record, on the form provided, the action taken by the school.

If information reported to a school is deemed a threat the school shall present the form and evidence to local law enforcement agencies.

If the information poses an immediate threat, school administrators shall follow procedures provided in the school's *Crisis Management and Response Plan*.

THREAT ASSESSMENT

When any threat of violence or terrorism has been reported to a school administrator, an investigation shall be made according to administrative procedures which shall include, at a minimum:

1. Conducting an interview with the person reporting a threat, the person allegedly making a threat, and all witnesses, and;
2. Securing any evidence, including but not limited to statements, writings, recordings, electronic messages, and photographs.

If the investigation results in evidence or information that raises a concern that a threat is credible, the school and School District shall implement measures to provide for ongoing protection of the safety and lives of all students and staff at the school.

MANDATORY EXAMINATION

If a law enforcement agency, based on its investigation as required by La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §17:409.4, determines that a student's threat is credible and imminent, it shall report it to the district attorney, who may file a petition no later than seven (7) days after receiving such report with the appropriate judicial district court for medical, psychological, and psychiatric examination. Where the district attorney, in his/her discretion, decides not to file the petition or does not file such petition during the requisite period, the student who

is the subject of a complaint and investigation shall be permitted to return to school unless the student is charged with assault on a teacher as provided in La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §14:38.2 or battery on a teacher as provided in La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §14:34.3. The school shall permit a student who is the subject of a complaint and investigation to return to school if at any point prior to a hearing the threat is determined not to be credible after an investigation by the school administration, a law enforcement agency, or the district attorney or by order of the court after a hearing unless the student is charged with assault on a teacher as provided in La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §14:38.2 or battery on a teacher as provided in La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §14:34.3. The school administrator shall notify any person who was a target of the threat at least two (2) school days prior to the student's return. The school administrator or his/her designee may conduct a search of the student or his property for weapons upon the student's return.

If the person who is reported to a local law enforcement agency is not a student, he or she shall not be permitted to be within five hundred feet (500') of any school until he or she has undergone a formal medical or mental health evaluation and has been deemed by a healthcare professional not to be dangerous to himself/herself or others. After such a determination, the person shall not be permitted in a school unless he has notified the school administrator of his intent to visit the school and he is notified that the administrator has provided at least two (2) school days' notice regarding the visit to anyone in the school who was directly threatened by the person. The school administrator may deny such person the right to visit the school.

LIABILITY

No person shall have a cause of action against any person for an action taken or statement made in adherence with this policy unless based on conduct that is maliciously, willfully, and deliberately intended to cause harm or harass.

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Ref: La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §§17:236, 17:409.1, 17:409.2, 17:409.3, 17:409.4, 17:409.5, 17:410; Board minutes, 10-10-19, 8-10-23.