Parental and Employee Notification of Weapon Incidents

24 P.S. §1303.2-A

Date of Issue: January 7, 2026

Purpose

Act 44 of 2025 (Act 44) added section 1303.2-A to the Pennsylvania School Code (School Code) and established parent and employee notification requirements for nonpublic schools, private academic schools, career and technical schools, charter schools, cyber charter schools, regional charter schools, school districts, and intermediate units. This circular provides guidance on adhering to section 1303.2-A of the School Code.

Parental and Employee Notification of Weapon Incidents

Section 1303.2-A defines a school entity as an area career and technical school, charter school, cyber charter school, regional charter school, school district, or intermediate unit. A school entity, as well as a nonpublic school or a private academic school, is required to notify parents, guardians, and school employees of incidents involving the possession of a weapon on any school property. Under Section 1303.2-A, school property is considered any of the following:

- Public school grounds.
- A location where a school-sponsored activity is conducted.
- A conveyance providing transportation to a school entity, nonpublic school, private school or school-sponsored activity.

A notification must be sent if the incident constitutes a violation of one of the following:

- Section 1317.2 of the School Code (Possession of Weapons Prohibited)
- Section 912 of the Crimes Code (Possession of Weapon on School Property)
- Locally established policies of the school entity, nonpublic school, or private school's governing body relating to weapons.

A "weapon" shall include but not be limited to any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nun-chuck stick, firearm, shotgun, rifle, and any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.

Unless the circumstances of the incident necessitate otherwise, the required notification must be made within 24 hours of the incident occurring and must be made using a method

of communication likely to reach parents, guardians, and school employees. Notification must be sent even in cases where a threat assessment determines there is no threat.

Location of Incident Involving Possession of a Weapon

If an incident involving the possession of a weapon occurs at a school building, the school entity, nonpublic school, or private academic school may limit notification to parents and guardians of students enrolled in or attending, or school employees assigned to the school building where the incident occurred.

If the school building at which the incident occurs shares a campus with other school buildings, the school entity, nonpublic school, or private academic school must notify parents and guardians of students enrolled in or attending, or school employees assigned to, any building situated on the shared campus. School entities, nonpublic schools, and private academic schools should consult with their solicitors to determine whether this provision is applicable to one or more of its school buildings.

If an Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth (AEDY) private provider operates on the property of a school entity, nonpublic, or private academic school and an incident triggering the notification occurred at the AEDY site, the notification requirement would be triggered for the school entity, nonpublic school, or private academic school.

If an incident involving the possession of a weapon occurs at a school-sponsored activity or on a public conveyance providing transportation to or from a school or school-sponsored activity, the school entity, nonpublic school, or private academic school shall ensure that the required notification reaches the appropriate population of parents, guardians, and school employees.

Act 44 provides that notification is not required if the incident is not directly related to the school-sponsored activity or the students or staff involved in the activity. School entities, nonpublic, and private academic schools should consult with their solicitors to determine whether a notification to parents, guardians, and employees is necessary based on the circumstances of the incident.

Privacy

Subject to 20 U.S.C. § 1232g (relating to family educational and privacy rights), a school employee to whom a student in possession of a weapon is assigned is deemed to be a school official with legitimate educational interest in the student, and the school entity, nonpublic school, or private academic school shall notify the school employee of the student's identity and portion of the student's records relating to the incident.

Except as required to notify the parent or guardian of a student found in possession of a weapon, to provide notice to school employees assigned to a student found in possession of a weapon, or as otherwise permitted, the school entity, nonpublic school, or private academic school's notification to parents, guardians, or school employees under this section shall not contain personally identifiable information about a student in compliance with 20 U.S.C. § 1232g.

Disaster Response and Reports to Law Enforcement

Nothing in section 1303.2-A:

- Limits a school entity, nonpublic school, or private academic school's responsibility to report incidents to local law enforcement prior to providing parents, guardians, and school employees with the required notification.
- In an emergency, supersedes or limits a school entity, nonpublic school, or private academic school's responsibility to follow the procedure in its disaster response and emergency preparedness plan developed under 35 Pa.C.S. § 7701(g) (relating to duties concerning disaster prevention).

Collective Bargaining

Section 1303.2-A shall not be construed to supersede or preempt any provision of a collective bargaining agreement between a school entity, nonpublic school or private school and an employe organization.

References

24 P.S. §1303.2-A

24 P.S. §1317.2

18 Pa.C.S. § 912

Contact

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