Frequently Asked Questions:
Weapon Incident Notifications in Ringgold Schools:

Understanding Act 44 of 2025 (24 P.S. §1303.2-A)

We understand that nothing matters more than your child's safety—and that trust depends on clear, timely communication. This FAQ explains what Pennsylvania law now requires our schools to share with parents and why you may sometimes receive less detail than you expect.

Please know that this law exists because parents asked for clarity and accountability. While privacy laws set limits, our district is committed to communicating proactively *within the law*.

What is Act 44 of 2025?

Act 44 of 2025, which just went into effect January 6, 2026, is a Pennsylvania law that requires schools to notify parents, guardians, and employees when a weapon is involved in a school-related incident on school property, school transportation or where a school-sponsored activity is held. The goal of the law is transparency, safety, and consistency.

What is considered a "weapon" under the law?

The law defines a weapon broadly and includes, but is not limited to:

- Firearms (including rifles and shotguns)
- Knives or cutting instruments
- Nun-chuck sticks
- Any tool or implement capable of causing serious bodily injury

Who receives the notification?

Notification may be limited based on where the incident occurred:

- If it happened in one building, only families and staff connected to that building may be notified.
- If buildings share a campus, all families and staff on that campus must be notified.
- If it occurred during transportation or a school-sponsored activity, the school must ensure the notification reaches the appropriate group.

This approach balances transparency with relevance.

Why are you not sharing the student's name or specific details?

Federal privacy law (FERPA) **prohibits schools from sharing personally identifiable student information** with the general school community.

This means:

- Schools **are not allowed** to share a student's name or personal record details in mass notifications.
- This includes not divulging disciplinary actions taken against students.
- Parents of the student involved **are directly notified** with appropriate details.
- Staff members assigned to the student may receive identifying information if they have a legitimate educational interest.

This is not secrecy—it is a legal requirement.

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Does the school still report incidents to law enforcement?

Yes! Nothing in Act 44 limits a school's responsibility to:

- Contact law enforcement
- Follow emergency and disaster response plans

Parent notification does **not replace** police involvement or emergency protocols.

Why is there more information coming from social media than from the school district?

Schools are required to share **verified, accurate information**—not speculation.

Social media often spreads incomplete or incorrect details, while schools must:

- Confirm facts
- Protect student privacy
- Coordinate with law enforcement

This can sometimes create a gap between what's rumored and what can legally be shared.

How does this law improve transparency?

Before Act 44, notification practices varied widely. This law:

- Creates a clear statewide standard
- Requires timely communication
- Ensures parents are informed.

It strengthens—not weakens—parent awareness and involvement.

Please know that Ringgold School District shares the same goal as families: safe students and informed parents.

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