Merchantville Board of Education 130 South Centre Street Merchantville, NJ 08109	File Code : 5142 Proposed : 08/23/1988 Adopted : 09/27/1988 Revised : 08/11/2009 Reviewed : 06/03/2024

Pupil Safety

The board of education recognizes the safety of its pupils as a consideration of utmost importance. The chief school administrator shall consult law enforcement agencies, health and social service providers, emergency management planners and other school and community resources in the development of the plans, procedures and mechanisms for school safety. The chief school administrator shall oversee development of a district-wide safety program with emphasis on accident prevention.

Facilities

The chief school administrator shall maintain all facilities and equipment in proper condition to provide a safe learning environment, ensuring compliance with state law on the handling, labeling and storing of hazardous substances. Safety regarding all aspects of playground equipment and activity will be maintained and supervised in compliance to law and code.

Staff Education and Training

All teachers shall be familiar with the provisions of this program that particularly concern them.

The chief school administrator shall inform all newly employed staff of school safety rules and regulations within 60 days of the effective date of their employment. All district employees will receive the appropriate inservice training to recognize and respond appropriately to safety concerns including emergencies and crises, in accordance with the district safety plans, procedures and mechanisms. The district safety plan will be updated annually and all employees will be notified of updates and changes to the safety plan in writing. Regulations concerning use and maintenance of eye protective devices shall be scrupulously enforced by all staff.

Student Supervision

The staff must maintain complete classroom and playground supervision during regular school hours. The chief school administrator shall seek the cooperation of parents/guardians to prevent any children being unsupervised on school property during lunch hour and during morning arrival and afternoon dismissal times. Further, the chief school administrator shall seek the cooperation of the police and other appropriate agencies in providing for the safety of pupils on or around school property. The board shall adopt the necessary regulations governing supervision of pupil safety.

No pupil shall leave the school before the end of the school day without permission of the chief school administrator or his/her designee. Pupils leaving before regular dismissal must be met in the school office and signed out by a parent/guardian or a person authorized to act in his/her behalf.

No pupil shall run school business errands that require him or her to leave school property.

The curriculum shall include courses in safety as required by state law. The chief school administrator shall oversee development and implementation of a vocational education safety program correlated with coursework as required by the core curriculum standards. In development of courses, the safety of participating pupils shall be a primary consideration.

A record shall be kept indicating the legal custodian of each pupil. Such custodian shall be responsible for informing the chief school administrator of any change in the pupil's custody. If one parent/guardian has been awarded custody of the pupil in a divorce, the other parent/guardian shall present to the chief school administrator a letter authorizing him/her to accompany the child from school before the child may be released. The chief school administrator may take reasonable steps to verify the letter. It is the responsibility of the person or agency having custody to inform the school that such authorization will be required.

Supervision of Students During Dismissal

Dismissal will be supervised. District staff will be assigned to specific locations and given defined responsibilities to supervise student dismissal in each district school facility. Regular and early dismissal will be supervised according to the same protocol unless otherwise specified. The chief school administrator is responsible for overseeing the development of protocols that are tailored to the age and needs of the students at each school facility. At a minimum these protocols shall include:

a. Staff assigned to supervise dismissal, and their locations and responsibilities
b. Where children will be retained awaiting appropriate escort and/or designated transportation
c. Provisions for supervision when a parent/escort is unable to pick up their child at the appropriate dismissal time.
d. Location and presence of municipal crossing guards

The board will review the dismissal procedures annually.

Supervision of Non-bused Students at Dismissal

The board shall require that the parent/guardian notify the school in advance of any arrangements for students requiring appropriate escort or designated transportation. The board requires signed permission for a student to be dismissed to walk home unescorted.

All documented arrangements will be considered permanent for the entire school year. Parents/Guardians may alter arrangements upon prior written notification, at least 24 hours in advance, to the chief school administrator or designee.

Parents/guardians leaving students at school that are to be escorted home will be reported to the proper authorities.

The chief school administrator or designee is responsible for the collection of all dismissal arrangements requested by the parents/guardians. The chief school administrator or designee is responsible for keeping a record of the dismissal arrangements and implementing the appropriate dismissal supervision in accommodation of these arrangements.

Notification of Dismissal Protocols

The chief school administrator or his designee shall ensure that parents are notified of the following:

a. School calendar including school closure and early dismissal dates and times; and any adjustments to the calendar
b. The school dismissal procedures
c. Dismissal protocol for all bused students, non-bused students and students in after-school programs or activities
d. Supervision arrangements for students at dismissal
e. Emergency plan for supervision of students left at school
f. After school program opportunities
g. Procedures for enrolling students in after school programs

The parent/guardian is responsible for reviewing the school calendar and complying with all school dismissal times and procedures. It is the parents/guardians responsibility to resume the custody of their child at the end of each school day.

The chief school administrator will develop procedures:

a. For parents/guardians to provide signed acknowledgement of receipt of the school calendar, including all school closure and early dismissal dates, and the school dismissal policy and procedures,
b. For parents/guardians to indicate and define the circumstances that the student is to be released from the school's care at dismissal,
c. For the collection and retention of all documents pertaining to receipt of calendar and escort/transportation arrangements.

Voluntary Fingerprinting Program

The board of education shall provide a voluntary fingerprinting program for the protection of its pupils. This program shall be carried out in cooperation with the county sheriff's office and local law enforcement officials in accordance with the requirements of law.

All pupils in grades kindergarten through nine shall be eligible to participate with written authorization of their parent/guardian. Completed fingerprint cards shall be given to the parent/guardian and shall not be retained by the school district or the law enforcement agency.

The chief school administrator is directed to provide an orientation program for those pupils for whom fingerprinting has been authorized, and to develop appropriate administrative regulations for the implementation of the voluntary fingerprinting program in the district.

Potentially Missing Children

Attendance practices, the dismissal precautions addressed in this policy and voluntary fingerprinting are part of the district's effort toward early identification of potentially missing children.

The chief school administrator will develop procedures that ensure cooperation with law enforcement for substances, weapons and safety. This may include cooperation with law enforcement in the activation of an "Amber Alert" which provides for the rapid dissemination of information, including a description of the missing child through broadcast media.

Release to an Individual Impaired by Drugs/Alcohol Prohibited

The board believes that allowing a child to be released into the custody of a parent/guardian or other authorized individual who appears to be impaired by drugs or alcohol can have tragic consequences. Therefore, the board prohibits release of a pupil into the custody of any person who appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that harm could come to the pupil if released to such a person. The chief school administrator/designee shall make the final determination as to whether an individual is impaired.

Possessions

Parents/guardians are requested not to permit their children to bring expensive or fragile objects to school and to label or otherwise identify clothing, books and personal items. The board is not responsible for items destroyed or stolen from lockers.

Megan's Law

Only law enforcement agencies in the community receive notification of the presence of Tier One offenders. The chief school administrator shall receive notification from the county prosecutor's office or local law enforcement officials when Tier Two or Tier Three sex offenders move into the district. The chief school administrator shall inform those employees/ volunteers whose duties regularly put them in a position to observe unauthorized persons on or near the property of the school. The chief school administrator shall determine whom to notify on the basis of this definition, as well as on specific job duties carried out in the school. If private vendors perform any of these functions, the chief school administrator shall inform the vendor. Notification may include, but is not limited to:

a Aides
b Bus drivers
c Coaches
d Maintenance staff
e Professional support staff
f School level administrative staff
g Security personnel
h Teachers' aides
i Teachers

School personnel are notified only in their capacity as such and shall not disseminate information about an offender to anyone not specifically identified by the county prosecutor or Attorney General. Any school employee who does so may be disciplined. If a school employee has reason to believe that an offender who has been the subject of a notification is a danger to someone outside the school environs, he/she shall immediately contact the local law enforcement agency or the county prosecutor.

District personnel shall not notify the following of the presence of Tier Two or Tier Three offenders:

a Members of PTO, PTA, HSA, etc.
b Organizations using school facilities
c Other schools
d Press

The chief school administrator shall provide registration forms to any organization that uses the school facilities, including parent-teacher organizations that wish to be notified by the county prosecutor's office of the presence of a Tier Two or Tier Three offender in the community.

In addition to the school personnel identified by the chief school administrator, students and parents/guardians shall be notified of the presence of Tier Three offenders. The prosecutor's office and local law enforcement shall supply the school with notices for them when a school is located in the area where a vulnerable population is likely to encounter a Tier Three offender. Dissemination of these notices shall be in accord with law and accomplished in cooperation with the county prosecutor's office. Confidentiality shall be a prime consideration in all communications with students and parents/guardians, and all directives of the county prosecutor and Attorney General's offices shall be observed.

When a student has been identified as a sex offender, all procedures of notification shall apply. When a parent/guardian has been identified as an offender, he/she may continue to participate in all appropriate parent/guardian activities, unless prohibited by legal constraint.

Newly hired staff and newly enrolled students and their parents/guardians shall be trained and informed of the presence of Tier Two and Tier Three offenders, unless the county prosecutor has notified the chief school administrator that notice cannot be given.

Students and district employees shall not be liable in any civil or criminal action for providing or failing to provide information relevant to notification. The chief school administrator shall prepare regulations to implement this policy and all directives of the county prosecutor's office to ensure careful adherence to Megan's Law.

School Violence Awareness Week and Annual Public Hearing

The school shall observe “School Violence Awareness Week.” This week will include discussions, presentations, and training for both students and staff, focused on the topic of preventing violence in school. Law enforcement personnel will be invited to join school teaching staff presenting age appropriate opportunities for students to discuss issues including but not limited to conflict resolution, student diversity and tolerance.

The board of education shall hold a public hearing on violence and vandalism pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A: 17-46 and N.J.A.C. 6A: 16-5.3. The requirements of the public hearing are covered in greater detail in file code 5131.5 of this manual.

Key Words

Pupil Safety, Safety, Student Safety

Legal References:

N.J.S.A. 2C:7-2 et seq.	Registration and Notification of Release of Certain Offenders
N.J.S.A. 2C:39-5	Unlawful possession of weapons
N.J.S.A. 18A:6-2	Instruction in accident and fire prevention
N.J.S.A. 18A:16-2	Physical examinations; requirement
N.J.S.A. 18A:17-42, -43, 45 -48	Public School Safety Law
N.J.S.A. 18A:20-21	Supervisors and other employees
N.J.S.A. 18A:35-5	Maintenance of physical training courses; features

N.J.S.A. 18A:35-5.1 -5.3	Lyme disease prevention; public school health curriculum
N.J.S.A. 18A:36-24-25	Missing children; legislative findings and declarations...
N.J.S.A. 18A:36-29 et seq.	Voluntary fingerprinting ...
N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12.1, -12.2	Protective eye devices required for teachers, pupils and visitors in certain cases ...
N.J.S.A. 18A:41-1 et seq.	Fire drills and fire protection
N.J.S.A. 30:5B-26 through -29	Child care before and after school hours ...
N.J.S.A. 34:5A-1 et seq.	Worker and Community Right to Know Act
N.J.S.A. 39:4-183.1a	Traffic control devices
N.J.S.A. 52:27D-123.9 et seq.	Definitions relative to playground safety
N.J.A.C.5:23-11 to 11.4	Playground Safety Sub code
N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1	Graduation requirements
N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1.1 et seq.	Programs to Support Student Development See particularly: N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.1, -5.1, 5.2, -5.5, -5.6, -5.7, -6.1, -6.2, -6.4, -6.5
N.J.A.C. 6A:19-10.1 et seq.	Safety and Health Standards See particularly: N.J.A.C. 6A:19-10.2
N.J.A.C. 6A:26-12.1 et seq.	Operation and Maintenance of Facilities See particularly: N.J.A.C. 6A:26-12.2, -12.5
N.J.A.C. 6A:27-11.1 et seq.	Safety

Manual for the Evaluation of Local School Districts

Possible Cross References:

*1250	Visitors
*1410	Local units
*3000/3010	Concepts and roles in business and noninstructional operations; goals and objectives
*3516	Safety
3530	Insurance management
*3541.33	Transportation safety
*4112.4	Employee health
*4131/4131.1	Staff development; inservice education/visitations/conferences
*4212.4	Employee health
*4231/4231.1	Staff development; inservice education/visitations/conferences
*5020	Role of parents/guardians
*5113	Absences and excuses
*5124	Reporting to parents/guardians
*5125	Pupil records
*5131	Conduct/discipline
*5131.5	Vandalism/violence
*5131.6	Drugs, alcohol, tobacco (substance abuse)
*5131.7	Weapons and dangerous instruments
*5141.1	Accidents
*5141.2	Illness
*5141.4	Child abuse and neglect
*5141.21	Administering medication
*5145.12	Search and seizure
*6114	Emergencies and disaster preparedness
*6142.12	Career education

*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.

NJSBA File Date: 06/07