Edition 7, Spring 2026

Safety Bulletin

Welcoming Winnie



In Fall 2025, The Winnetka Public Schools introduced a Therapy Dog Program designed to enhance student well-being and foster connection across our schools. Winnie accompanies Mr. Ray Finnerty, Director of Safety & Security to provide intermittent school-based opportunities that support emotional regulation, comfort, and engagement for both students and staff. Since her introduction, Winnie has made over 150 visits to schools (and counting). Winnie is looking forward to greeting the many families who will be attending school events in the spring.

Winnetka Police Statement on "Paranoia" Game

The Winnetka Police Department is aware of a game played by many high school students throughout several North Shore communities called "Paranoia." In the game, teams of players use toy guns to shoot either a soft or water-based projectile at intended targets, eliminating other players from the game. It is played outside of school hours and away from school grounds, but participants may try to locate students in residences, businesses, and parks. Students playing the game will also often attempt to hide or conceal themselves, enter private property without permission, or drive in a dangerous manner to catch their "target." While we appreciate that the game is meant to be recreational, we are very concerned that students may put themselves in unsafe situations that may have very serious consequences.

Locally, the Winnetka Police Department has responded to or assisted other municipalities with reports concerning young adults in possession of and/or carrying a weapon, which were connected to this game. Some students have modified their "weapons" to be painted all black in efforts to make them look more realistic. Law enforcement takes every call for service very seriously, and realistic-looking weapons and their public displays carry extreme risks.

The Winnetka Police Department strongly discourages participation in this game due to the risks of dangerous behavior and the potential for toy guns to be mistaken for real guns. Please speak to your children/students/peers you know who may be involved in this game and encourage them to use caution and good judgment if they cannot be dissuaded from participating.

Pre-Register Your ID Now for Spring School Events and Save Time

As spring events begin to fill your calendar, we strongly encourage all parents/family members to proactively make a visit to your school to get your ID (Driver's License) registered in our Raptor System. This system allows us to do an immediate background check on visitors during school hours so we can ensure that all those within our school buildings are safe and clear to be there. By taking care of this in advance of a spring event, you should experience a more efficient entry at the event.



E-Bike & E-Scooter Reminders from the Winnetka Police Department

The Village of Winnetka regulates the use of e-bikes, e-scooters, e-dirt bikes, and other motor-driven vehicles with the goal of sidewalk and roadway safety for all residents. These regulations apply to all village-owned or village-maintained property. Violations may result in a fine of $100 for both the operator and the parent/legal guardian (if applicable).

PLEASE REMEMBER:

- Any person operating a device on a public road or public sidewalk must follow the rules of the road, including traveling below the posted speed limit.
- It is illegal to operate a vehicle with more passengers than the number it is designed/equipped for.
- It is illegal to modify a device from its original design to change its speed, method of propulsion or braking, or to remove pedals, chains, or add a throttle.
- All individuals riding e-bikes must wear a helmet at all times.
- The person operating the device must be able to keep both hands on the handlebars/steering device at all times.

If you have questions about the classification of a device, please call the Winnetka Police Department at 847-501-6034.

Winnetka E-Bike, E-Scooter, E-Dirt Bike and Other Motor-Driven Vehicle Regulations

Device	Minimum Age	Driver's License Required	Public Sidewalks	Public Roadways*	Green Bay Trail	Private Property
Pedal Bicycles	None	✗	✓†	✓	✓	✓
E-Bikes Class 1 & 2	16‡	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
E-Bikes Class 3	16	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
E-Scooters	18	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
E-Dirt Bikes	16	✓	✗	✗§	✗	✓
Personal Mobility Devices	None	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓
Toy Vehicles	None	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓
Out-of-Class Electric Vehicles / Other Motor-Driven Vehicles	16	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓

* Any device operated on a public roadway or public sidewalks must comply with all the rules of the road.
† All bicycles must be walked on the sidewalks in the Village business districts.
‡ Class 1 & 2 electric bicycles may be operated by a person under the age of 16 if they are accompanied by a responsible adult.
§ E-dirt bikes must be properly registered and titled to be operated on a public roadway.

Pick Up/Drop Off Protocol

- When dropping your children off, please make sure you pull up to the curb and the child exits curbside
- Do not double park to let your children out of the car, this is not only illegal but dangerous
- Always be aware of your surroundings and mindful of children who are walking or biking to school
- The Winnetka Police strictly enforce school zone speed limits and cell phone use while driving
- Our crossing guards have a very important job; please respect them by listening to their instructions at all times
- Remind your children to use the crosswalks when crossing the street and to walk–not run–when crossing
- This protocol will also be strictly enforced during this Adventures in Learning (held at Washburne and Crow Island School in June and July).

Medical Forms Required by the State of Illinois are Due Before the First Day of School 2026/2027

Visit the District website (www.winnetka36.org) for access to Health Forms.

PLEASE SEE THE INFORMATION BELOW:

State of Illinois Health Examination: Kindergarten & Grade 6

Eye Examination: Kindergarten

Dental Examination: Kindergarten, Grade 2 & Grade 6

Please use the links on the **district's health page** to upload your child's completed forms.



Water Safety on Lake Michigan (and beyond)

As a community located near a large body of water, we want to encourage safe practices amongst our students and families. This water safety resource from **The American Red Cross** offers tips on how you can foster safe practices for your family around water. The Winnetka Fire Department shares the following beach and marina safety tips to help you stay safe as you enjoy beautiful days on the lake:

SWIMMING SAFETY:

- Be aware of hazards, such as underwater obstacles, sharp objects in the sand, and inclement weather conditions. Pay attention to posted warning signs.
- Swim with a buddy, even in lifeguarded areas. Never swim alone, regardless of your age or level of swimming skills.
- Always enter unknown or shallow water cautiously. Only dive in water clearly marked as safe for diving, and that is at least 10 feet deep with no underwater obstacles.
- Know what to do in a water emergency, including how to safely help someone in trouble in the water: call for emergency help, and perform CPR, if needed.

BOATING SAFETY:

- Poorly-tuned engines produce more carbon monoxide. Keep your engine properly maintained and follow the manufacturer's instructions for service.
- Install carbon monoxide alarms listed by a quality testing laboratory inside your boat. Test alarms before each trip.
- If your carbon monoxide alarm sounds, move to a fresh air location immediately and call for emergency help once in a safe place.
- Only use electrical cords safe for marine use. Never use household electrical cords near water.
- Never allow swimming near a boat, marina, or launching ramp. Residual electric current could flow into the water from the boat or the marina's wiring. This could put someone at risk of electrical shock drowning.
- Know where the main breakers are on both the boat and shore power source. This will help you shut down the electricity quickly in an emergency.

The Winnetka Fire Department holds CPR/AED Training classes every month. **Register for a class here.**

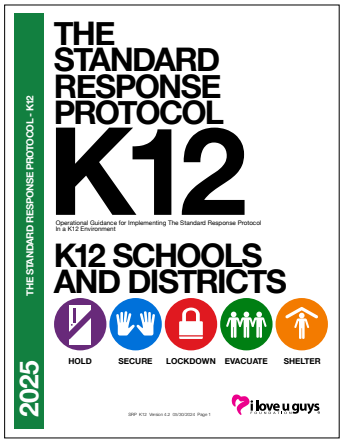


Bike & Traffic Safety

In order to prevent traffic-related incidents from occurring in our community, it is important to be vigilant as a rider, pedestrian, or driver when traveling through town. Our school principals review bike and pedestrian safety practices with students at the start of the school year and again in the spring when bike riding increases. We ask that you also take a moment to re-review the following information with your family:

- Illinois law prohibits the use of cell phones or other electronic devices while in a school zone, even if it's hands free. It is dangerous and is enforced as a moving violation by the police.
  - Please do not use pick up and drop off time to check texts, etc. This potentially endangers others.
  - Please remind your students that they should not be using cell phones or other electronic devices while biking.
- Crossing guards are present at busier intersections near our schools to assist with safety. Please respect the authority of the crossing guards and follow their directions
- Please talk to children to ensure that they understand the importance of using caution and following all traffic signals.
  - Note that there are not stop signs at every intersection, especially on Oak and Elm Streets, which are heavily used thoroughfares to Crow Island, Skokie, and Washburne.
- We STRONGLY recommend that all students who bike, skateboard, or scooter to school wear a helmet, regardless of age.
- Students should bike on the sidewalk wherever possible (except in Village of Winnetka business districts where bikes must be walked), and be respectful to pedestrians. Also, children are expected to walk their bikes through crosswalks.
- Each elementary school also has specific traffic procedures and parking restrictions that are enforced by police. We encourage you to review these procedures and contact your building administrator if you are unclear.
- The speed limit in our school zones is 20 miles per hour during school days. For the safety of all, please follow the posted speed limit.
- Recommended safe routes to each neighborhood school are as follows:
  - **Crow Island School**
  - **Greeley School**
  - **Hubbard Woods School**





"I Love U Guys" Standard Response Protocol (SRP)

The Winnetka Public Schools is utilizing the ""I Love U Guys" Standard Response Protocol, which includes a consistent vocabulary regarding response to a variety of unforeseen situations. For students, this provides continuity of expectations and actions throughout their educational career. For staff, this becomes a simpler process for training and drills. For first responders, the common vocabulary and protocols establish a greater predictability that persists through the duration of an incident. Students and staff will practice Standard Response Protocol throughout the course of emergency drills this year. In June 2025, over 50 staff members and first responders engaged in Reunification Training led by "I Love U Guys" personnel.

The "I Love U Guys" Foundation's programs for response and reunification are used in more than 50,000 schools, districts, departments, agencies, organizations and communities around the world. They are created through the research-based best practices of school administrators, psychologists, public space safety experts, families, and first responders.

SAFE2HELP Resource

The Safe, Secure and Healthy Schools Resolution, passed by the Board in September 2022, solidified the District's commitment to ensuring students, staff, parents and community members have access to an additional resource to report concerns of any kind regarding themselves or others. As a result, the District has recently partnered with SAFE2HELP Illinois. Safe2HELP is a resource tailored for teens and pre-teens, but is open to all members of the Winnetka community, including staff. A concerned person can dial 844–4-SAFEIL or text "SAFE2 (72332)" and be connected by text message with a licensed social worker. While we encourage students, staff and families to report concerns within our schools, allowing us to follow our internal safety protocol, we also want to ensure there is awareness of this reporting option outside of school hours.

Support for Mental Health

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) offers resources for parents and teachers in talking to children about a variety of topics. In addition, each of our five schools is staffed with a school psychologist and at least one full time social worker. We highly recommend that students and families access the resources available in their schools. Each of the five schools incorporate the four anchor strategies of RULER's Social Emotional Learning curriculum as a means to support these needs amongst our students and comply with state learning standards. The State of Illinois requires all public schools to include social emotional learning standards in annual instructional delivery.









BE SMART

Safe Storage

The Board's **Safe, Secure and Healthy Schools Resolution** included an update to our Parent/Student handbook to include information about the obligation of any parent who is a gun owner to comply with state guidance regarding secure storage of firearms under **Illinois HB2254 Safe Gun Storage Act**. All families must sign the Parent/Student handbook annually as children are registered for the new school year.

The **Be SMART framework** is designed to help parents and adults normalize conversations about gun safety and take responsible actions that can prevent child gun deaths and injuries.

- **Secure** all guns in your home and vehicles
- **Model** responsible behavior around guns
- **Ask** about the presence of unsecured guns in other homes
- **Recognize** the role of guns in suicide
- **Tell** your peers to be SMART

Learn more about secure arm storage here: **Gun Safety Resources | Be SMART (besmartforkids.org)** If you have a firearm that you would like to surrender to be destroyed, you may bring it to the Winnetka Police Department at 410 Green Bay Road at any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This is a service the Police Department has always offered, so please keep this in mind if you have a gun you may want to destroy. The **Village Code** indicates that no one will be asked for identification, nor will they be subject to prosecution for turning in any handgun or ammunition.



Securly Home

The District has a resource to enable parents to receive a weekly email sharing their student's web activity using their school account. An introductory video can be **viewed here**. For a detailed overview of the capabilities and how to get started, watch **this video**.

Additional resources:

- **Home App Walkthrough.PDF**
- **Securly's Standard Filtering Categories**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Resources for Families



If you are looking for how to better understand AI tools and insight into monitoring your child(rens') use of the technology, review **Common Sense Media's AI evaluations**. Common Sense Media is well known for their evaluation of TV Shows, movies, and games/websites to help parents make informed decisions on whether to give their child access. Similarly, these AI evaluations help them to understand the benefits and risks of various platforms, as well as how they might be used. Users should be restricted to age 13 and above in the absence of adult supervision.

Spring Heating and Cooling

The spring season can often bring spurts of warm and cold weather in unpredictable patterns. While we are grateful for the addition of air conditioning in all five of our buildings, it is important that staff, students and families recognize that these systems do not operate like those we have in our homes. They are not designed to move back and forth between heating and cooling for daily desired comfort. Instead, they are designed to be activated at the start of each heating or cooling season. Air conditioning is currently scheduled to be turned on in all buildings during the week of May 25. Even then, spaces may vary in temperature depending on your preferred comfort level. We always encourage students and staff to bring an extra layer (sweatshirt or jacket) to be ensure everyone is comfortable at school.

District/School Safety & Security Protocol

- District and building safety plans are thoroughly developed in conjunction with the Winnetka Police and Fire Departments and reviewed on an annual basis as an administrative team and school staff at all five campuses.
- The district is committed to sending out timely messages if/when an emergency occurs in one of our buildings.
- Drills are practiced by all adults and students unless parents opt their children out of the drill (this must be allowed by law).
- The district has completed the implementation of upgraded security features for all of our schools, including secure vestibules, new cameras and other security features throughout all five buildings.
- Custodial and maintenance teams engage in regular building sweeps to ensure all exterior doors are closed and locked.
- All school visitors must submit their ID to be scanned before being allowed access to the building. IDs will be held and badging distributed to identify visitors until they exit the building.
- All employees, outside vendors (club sponsors, contractor, utility providers, etc.) and substitutes, must undergo a state and federal background check before being allowed to work in our schools/access our buildings. This includes all employees of Bulley & Andrews and associated vendors completing construction and renovation work.

Communication Regarding Safety Matters

The chart below outlines current and adapted District communications responses relating to safety matters.

Communication Scenario	Corresponding Protocol
Unplanned Ambulance/Police/Fire visit to school for medical support for individual student or staff member	Timely communication from Principal to class or whole school (depending on what was observed/occurred)
Unplanned or accidental activation of safety drill (i.e. alarm triggered accidentally, smoke in kitchen at Washburne)	Timely communication from Principal to whole school (depending on what was observed/occurred) to notify families
Planned safety drill including Police Department/Fire Department	Proactive communication to families from Principal/Director of Safety & Security before drill with opportunity to opt a student out
Safety concern related to building, students or staff (i.e. situation that requires Police involvement and/or implementation of Standard Response Protocol)	Timely tailored communications to families based on situation from Principal, Director of Safety & Security or Superintendent + Message comes from Superintendent & Director of Safety & Security + Message always acknowledges any involvement of Winnetka Police and Fire

A Message from the Fire Chief: Storm Safety

Spring can often bring unpredictable weather. The Winnetka Fire Department wishes to remind you of some safety tips to stay safe during storms:

ALL SEVERE WEATHER:

- Keep weather notifications and alerts enabled on cell phones to ensure you receive severe weather warnings and updates.
- Charge your cell phone in advance of expected storms.
- If you are asked to evacuate your home, disconnect all electrical appliances before leaving, if possible.
- Tune in to local TV/radio channels for emergency advisories and instructions.
- Make a safety plan. Identify locations to safely shelter. Don't forget pets when making your family's emergency plans.

THUNDERSTORMS & LIGHTNING:

- Avoid handling metal, electrical equipment, telephones, bathtubs, water faucets, and sinks, because electric current from lightning can travel through wires and pipes.
- "When thunder roars, go indoors!" Whenever possible, move indoors to a building or a car with a roof. Avoid taking shelter under trees.
- Avoid fallen power lines and trees. Call 911 to report them.

TORNADOES:

- Pay attention to weather and emergency alerts for current information and instructions.
- Immediately move to a safe location. Move to an interior room on the lowest level of the building, as far as possible away from exterior doors and windows.

FLOODING:

- Avoid walking through water that has seeped in your home – it may contain hazardous materials.
- Never drive through flooded roadways. Just six inches of fast-moving water can knock you down, and one foot of moving water can sweep your vehicle away.

Visit **Ready.gov** and **Weather.gov** to learn more about how to stay safe during different types of severe weather.





