

RELATIONSHIP WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

Policy Code:

5120

The board recognizes the importance of law enforcement authorities in providing safe schools. The board desires an effective working relationship with law enforcement. To this end, the superintendent and principals are expected to communicate the needs of the schools and work with law enforcement officials in developing joint programs and in establishing protocols for handling situations in which the assistance of law enforcement is helpful or necessary.

The superintendent shall establish procedures for school contacts with law enforcement agencies. School resource officers will be assigned duties as specified in a written understanding between the law enforcement agency and the school system.

B. SCHEMATIC DIAGRAMS AND KEYS

The superintendent shall ensure that local law enforcement have schematic diagrams, including digital schematic diagrams, of all school facilities and provide them updates of the schematic diagrams when the school system makes substantial facility modifications, such as the addition of new facilities or modifications to doors or windows. The superintendent shall also provide local law enforcement with (1) either keys to the main entrance of all school buildings or emergency access to key storage devices for all school buildings and (2) updated access to school buildings when changes are made to the locks of the main entrances or to the key storage devices.

C. INVESTIGATIONS

Law enforcement officials, including school resource officers, should not initiate administrative investigations, including investigations to determine whether student behavior policies have been violated, but may be used to assist school officials in such investigations for safety or other reasons as determined necessary by the principal or designee. Law enforcement officials may be contacted to report possible criminal conduct on school premises or at school-sponsored activities. (See policy 4335, Criminal Behavior, for more information regarding mandatory reporting of certain criminal behaviors.) However, school officials will independently investigate violations of school rules or board policies even if such violations may also involve criminal behavior.

School administrators and employees are expected to cooperate in criminal investigations but should attempt to do so in a way that minimizes disruptions to the educational environment. Visits by probation officers to students during the school day must be in accordance with policy 5020, Visitors to the Schools.

C. INTERROGATIONS

Absent extenuating circumstances, law enforcement officials should avoid questioning students at school for non-school-related issues. Extenuating circumstances include, but are not limited to, law enforcement coming onto school property in “hot pursuit” of a suspect, the need to question a student for a child abuse investigation, or crime being committed on school property.

Upon request, the principal or designee and law enforcement officials shall discuss whether it is necessary to conduct the student questioning at school. However, if law enforcement directs that the questioning will take place or produces a subpoena, school staff shall comply.

If questioning will take place at school, the principal or designee shall make a reasonable attempt to notify the parents (except in cases of suspected child abuse or neglect by the parent) and give them an opportunity to be present at the time of the questioning. The questioning will take place in a private office, conference room, etc., away from the student body, school staff, and public. It is law enforcement’s responsibility to meet any legal requirements from a law enforcement perspective relating to advising a student of constitutional or statutory rights.

If the student’s parent or guardian is not present during the questioning, the school administrator shall remain in the room to witness the questioning unless directed otherwise by law enforcement. If the parent or guardian is present and requests to witness the interview, the school administrator shall so advise law enforcement. The law enforcement officials shall then decide whether and how to proceed.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-36, -47, -105.53

Cross References: School Safety (policy 1510/4200/7270), Criminal Behavior (policy 4335), Student Searches (policy 4342), Visitors to the Schools (policy 5020)

Adopted: February 6, 2017