

I. Policy Statement

The Board of Education believes that the presence of weapons on school property poses a serious threat to the safety and well being of students and staff. It is unlawful for any person to carry or possess any firearm, knife, or deadly weapon of any kind on any public school property of the State of Maryland. Therefore, the presence of any weapon on school property, on a school bus, in a vehicle locked or unlocked located on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity is strictly forbidden.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to regulate the possession of weapons on school property for the protection of students and staff.

III. Definitions

A. Weapon - object or implement capable of causing harm to another or used in such a way as to cause harm to another.

1. The term weapon includes:

- rifle
- gun
- firearm
- pellet gun
- bb gun
- pocket knives
- dirk knives
- bowie knives
- switchblade knives
- star knives
- buck knives
- hunting knives
- throwing stars
- razors
- metal knuckles
- nunchakus
- explosive devices

- any implement, visible or concealed, possessed under a circumstance that would reasonably lead a person to believe it was a weapon or would be used as a weapon
 - poison
2. The term weapon does not include any antique firearm rendered permanently inoperable unless used to harm another.
- B. Firearm - Any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive. This includes:
- The frame or receiver of any such weapon.
 - Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer.
 - Any destructive device.

IV. Standards

- A. Notice that weapons are prohibited on school property, on a school bus, in a vehicle locked or unlocked located on school property, and at school-sponsored activities shall be communicated to all students, parents/guardians, and staff members annually, to any new student upon enrollment, and when deemed necessary by the principal.
- B. It shall be a violation of this policy for any student to carry or possess any weapon on school property, on a school bus, in a vehicle locked or unlocked located on school property, or at school-sponsored activities.
- C. The use of permanently inoperable rifles by JROTC cadets during instructional time and at other times when under the direct supervision of JROTC instruction shall not be a violation of this policy.
- D. A student who possesses a firearm on the school property, on a school bus, in a vehicle locked or unlocked located on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity shall be expelled from the Howard County Public School System for a minimum of one year. The superintendent may, on a case-by-case basis, specify a shorter period of expulsion or an alternate educational setting for a student who has brought a firearm onto school property under certain circumstances.

V. Compliance

- A. The school-based administrator will annually notify all students, parents, and staff members of the standards included in this policy.

- B. Any disciplinary action taken as a result of a violation of this policy will be administered using the Howard County Student Code of Conduct and in accordance with Policy 9200, Discipline.

VI. Delegation of Authority

The superintendent is authorized to develop all necessary and appropriate procedures to implement and monitor compliance with this policy.

VII. References

- A. Legal
 - Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 27, §36A
 - Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, §7-305(E)
- B. Other Board Policies
 - Policy 9200, Discipline

ADOPTED: January 25, 1990

AMENDED: May 14, 1992
June 23, 1994
September 14, 1995
March 22, 2005

EFFECTIVE: March 22, 2005

I. Dissemination of Information

- A. The principal will annually notify all students, parents/guardians and staff members that weapons are prohibited on school property, on school buses, in a vehicle locked or unlocked located on school property, and at school-sponsored activities. Notification may be:
1. Given via an announcement over the public address system at the beginning of the school year and at other times as deemed appropriate.
 2. Published in the school newsletter and/or student/parent/faculty handbooks.
 3. Posted for students and staff (e.g., on bulletin boards in the main office, teachers' lounge, guidance office and other commonly used areas).
 4. Published with school lunch menus.
 5. Provided to new students and parents/guardians through the registration process.

II. Violation of Policy

- A. If a staff member suspects that a student is in violation of the Weapons Policy, the student must be referred to the principal who will determine if a violation has occurred.
- B. If it is determined by the principal that a student is in possession of a weapon, the principal will assess the situation and take appropriate action.
1. If the student is in possession of a knife, firearm or other weapon that poses a serious and immediate threat to the student or others, the principal will isolate/secure the student and contact local law enforcement authorities.
 2. If the student is in possession of a weapon that does not pose a serious and immediate threat to the student or others, the principal will secure the weapon.

- C. Disciplinary action will be taken using the Howard County Student Code of Conduct and Course of Disciplinary Action and in accordance with Policy 3431, Discipline. Students who violate this policy may be suspended or expelled.
- D. The principal will, without revealing the identity of the student(s) involved, inform the PTA president of incidents involving the presence of weapons on school property or at school-sponsored activities.

III. Other

- A. With prior approval of the principal, teachers may arrange for representatives of organizations focusing on history, historical reenactments, or historical preservation to bring permanently inoperable weapons of historical significance to schools as part of instructional activities.

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