

POLICY 5601—SCHOOL CLEARANCE FOLLOWING A CRISIS SITUATION

The Board is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of students during the school day, and will take action necessary to provide for the safety and security of its students, staff and/or property. In “crisis situations,” the Board reserves the right to exclude a student who has been determined to pose an imminent or potential threat to the safety of the student, other students or staff, pending appropriate mental health clearance.

1. Examples of “Crisis Situations” (*not exclusive or exhaustive*)

- a. Actions creating an imminent danger to the student or others;
- b. Verbalization(s) or other action(s) threatening or potentially threatening the health, safety or well-being of the student, staff or other students;
- c. Verbalization(s) or other action(s) reflecting an intent or plan to harm the student or others (regarding self-harm, see also Policy No. 5350);
- d. Verbalization(s) or other action(s) indicating that the student may be at risk of causing harm to the student or other (regarding self-harm, see also Policy No. 5350);
- e. Possession of object(s) or material(s) posing a threat to the health, safety or well-being of the student, staff or other students (regarding self-harm, see also Policy No. 5350)
- f. Posting inflammatory images and/or statements online or in social media relating to, but not limited to, guns, bombs, knives or other such objects that would cause a reasonable person to feel threatened or intimidated.

2. Discipline

- a. A student’s exclusion based upon an identified crisis situation shall not be considered a disciplinary consequence.
- b. This Policy is intended to address mental health related issues only (i.e., to ensure that the student does not represent a danger to him/herself or others), and does not supersede the implementation of appropriate disciplinary action for infractions of school regulations or action required by N.J.S.A. 18A:40A-12 or N.J.A.C. 6A:16-4.3 as described in policies and explained in student handbooks and/or Code of Student Conduct. (See Policy No. 5600)

3. Procedures

- a. In situations where a student presents as an imminent danger to himself or others, school emergency procedures will be followed, and supersede the provisions of Section III. C of this Policy.
- b. Staff members shall immediately notify the School Principal, or his/her designee, of any potential crisis situations.
- c. In response to every report of a Crisis situation, the School Principal (or designee) shall:
 1. Notify the Crisis Intervention Team (or other designated team/individual responsible for the initial assessment of the student)
 2. Notify the Superintendent of Schools; and
 3. Notify the police if in accordance to the guidelines set forth in the Law Enforcement Memorandum of Agreement.
 4. Notify the parent or legal guardian.
- d. In response to every report of a crisis situation, the superintendent or designee shall consult with the principal and/or members of Crisis Intervention Team in order to assess whether or not the student presents as a potential danger to him/herself or others, and to determine whether or not the student requires a mental health assessment prior to reinstatement.
- e. Provisions shall be made for the appropriate care and supervision of the student pending either: (1) a determination by administrators or the Crisis Intervention Team that the student's exclusion is not required; or (2) the student's release to his or her parent/guardian.

4. Assessment and Reinstatement

- a. If the superintendent, principal or Crisis Intervention Team determines that the student presents as a potential danger to him/herself or others and requires a mental health assessment prior to reinstatement, the Principal shall notify the student's parent/guardian of this determination.
- b. The assessment must be completed by a Board of Education approved psychiatrist or other licensed or certified mental health professional (e.g., psychologist, psychiatrist, social worker (or psychiatric nurse practitioner) as determined by the District. The Principal/designee shall provide the student's parents/guardians with appropriate referral information for qualified mental health providers as per our district contract with Saint Clare's Behavioral Health and their Central Evaluation and Referral service (CER). Emergency assessments will take place at CER in Boonton or Psychiatric Emergency Services (PES) with the determination of the location of the assessment based on the acuity of the presenting problem, and concern for any apparent medical risk. In addition, the child may be seen in PES if CER is closed or if CER is at capacity for appointments.

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1. The contracted charge for the assessment will be at the negotiated rate; however if the child/family has insurance that is contracted with St. Clare's, the parents/guardian's medical insurance will be billed first for the assessment, with the district paying for the balance due.
 2. If there is no insurance, or if the insurer is not contracted with St. Clare's, then the bill for the same will be sent to the School District for payment.
- c. For purposes of the assessment, it is necessary for the evaluator to have access to all relevant information regarding the student and the incident giving rise to the exclusion. The student's parent/guardian must provide consent for a member of the District to contact the professional completing the evaluation to provide necessary background information.
1. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached and the student is screened and/or assessed by the appropriate school personnel as being in imminent danger of harming him/herself or others, the school may initiate an immediate assessment.
- d. The assessment report must include the Evaluator's name and license number as well as the following:
1. Identifying information i.e. the student's name and date of birth, date of evaluation, and date of report;
 2. Medical and family history;
 3. Review of presenting problem or incident;
 4. Mental status examination;
 5. Diagnosis, as appropriate;
 6. Triggers for recurrence, as appropriate;
 7. Recommendations for follow-up services, as appropriate; and
 8. Other information deemed relevant by evaluator;
 9. A specific statement that the student does not present a danger to him/herself or others.
 10. Confirmation that the evaluator assessed the student in accordance with the standards set forth in Section IV. D of this Policy following and in connection with the precipitating school based incident.
- e. If the parents or guardians assume the cost of the assessment (through a provider of their own choosing), the resulting report is their property, and will require their consent before being released to the school district. Parents are encouraged to share such information with the school district. However, they must provide a clearance letter that includes at least the following information: (see next page)

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1. Student's name and date of birth;
 2. Confirmation that the evaluator assessed the student in accordance with the standards set forth in Section IV.D of this Policy following and in connection with the precipitating school based incident;
 3. The date of the assessment; and
 4. A specific statement that the student does not present as a danger to him/herself or others.
- f. If the parents or guardians assume the cost of the assessment (through a provider of their own choosing), the district reserves the right to obtain its own assessment by an evaluator of its choosing.
- g. Any evaluation report procured by the district is the property of the district. The parent may have access to such report, but may not limit or deny the District's access to such report.
- h. Regardless of whether the school district obtains an assessment by an evaluator of its selection or relies upon the assessment and/or clearance letter by an evaluator the parent/guardian selects, **the final determination as to the student's readiness to return to school rests with the school district.**

2. Re-Entry to School

Following receipt of the report/school clearance letter, the District shall schedule a meeting with the child's parents/guardian and an appropriate school district designee. The discussion may include the following:

- a. Consideration of CST referral, as appropriate
- b. The need for follow-up treatment, as necessary
- c. The need for additional evaluative information (beyond clearance letter)

If re-entry is deemed appropriate at that time, the District shall schedule a re-entry meeting with the child and his/her parents/guardians and an appropriate school district designee to facilitate the child's re-entry

3. Instruction During Exclusion

Students will be provided with appropriate home or other out of school instruction in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10.1 et seq. during any period of exclusion.

Legal References:
N.J.S.A. 18A:17-42

Approved: October 16, 2018