

Investigations, Arrests, and Other Student Contact by Law Enforcement and Health and Human Services

The Hitchcock County School District and its administrators and staff desire to maintain a positive working relationship with law enforcement officers and other representatives of governmental bodies in the discharge of their duties. However, this desire must be balanced against other equally important factors such as a student's legal rights, ensuring that a student's time spent in school is for education, and acknowledging that the school stands *in loco parentis* to the students.

"Law enforcement officer" means police officers, county sheriffs, state patrolmen, Health and Human Service workers, Child Protective Services workers, Office of Juvenile Services workers, probation officers, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, Federal Bureau of Investigations agents, or any other government investigatory workers.

"Parent" means the biological or adoptive mother or father, guardian, responsible relative, or any other person who has claimed legal or actual charge or control of the student pursuant to Nebraska law or Title 92 Nebraska Administrative Code Chapter 19.

Law enforcement officers are encouraged whenever possible to talk to a student away from the school before or after school hours so as to cause as little disruption as possible to the student's education.

Law enforcement officers may be called to the school at the request of school administration, or they may initiate contact with the school for their own purposes. Contact between the school and law enforcement officers on matters involving students shall be made through the office of the superintendent or building principal and the law enforcement officer. All reasonable attempts should be made to avoid embarrassing the student before his or her teachers and peers, and to avoid disrupting the student's and school's education program. Any questioning by law enforcement officers that is permitted should be conducted in a private room or area where confidentiality can be maintained. This should be an area removed from

observation by or contact with other pupils and school personnel.

School staff shall promptly notify the superintendent when a student is questioned, arrested, or removed from school grounds by law enforcement officers.

School Related Criminal Activity

This section applies to alleged or suspected criminal activity that occurs on school grounds; in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by a school being used for a school purpose or in a vehicle being driven for a school purpose by a school employee or by his or her designee; or at a school-sponsored activity or athletic event.

Law enforcement officers will be allowed to contact and question students at school regarding school related criminal activity as provided below.

The building principal must be notified before a student may be questioned in school or taken from a classroom by law enforcement. The building principal should request identification of the officers, their affiliation with the identified law enforcement agency, and whether their purpose is to interview, interrogate, or take custody of the student.

The building principal will make reasonable attempts to contact a student's parent for their consent and/or presence before the student is interviewed. In the event that a parent cannot be contacted after reasonable attempts, the student will be questioned only if the law enforcement officer identifies emergency circumstances requiring immediate questioning. A building principal or designee shall be present for such questioning solely to further school purposes or avoid duplication of the investigative process. The student will be brought to a private room and the contact will be made out of sight of others as much as practicable.

If the student is suspected of criminal activity, it is the responsibility of the law enforcement officer to advise a student of his or her rights against self-incrimination.

If at any time the district's representative believes that the questioning is being conducted in an inappropriate manner and clearly contrary to the rights of the student, then the representative shall request that the law enforcement

activities cease. The building principal will also make another attempt to contact the student's parent.

The building principal shall document steps taken to notify parents, summarize the law enforcement activities, identify the actions taken by the District on behalf of the student, and any further contacts with law enforcement officer.

Non-School Related Criminal Activity

Law enforcement officials may not question students at school unless parental consent is obtained or the law enforcement authorities have a warrant or court order.

Taking a Student into Custody

Law enforcement officers seeking custody of a student must contact the superintendent or building principal. The principal will request the arresting law enforcement officer to provide a copy of the arrest warrant, written parental consent, court order, or other document giving authority to take the student into legal custody. If there is no document presented, the principal should obtain the officer's name, badge number identifying the law enforcement agency, date, time, the reason for the arrest, and the place to which the student is reportedly being taken. Whenever practicable, the arrest or release of the student should be conducted in a location and in a manner that minimizes observation by others.

When a law enforcement officer removes a student from the school, the building principal will take immediate steps to notify the parent about the student's removal and the place to which the minor is reportedly being taken, except when a minor has been taken into custody as a victim of suspected child abuse.

Child Abuse and Neglect

When law enforcement officers seek to investigate reports of alleged child neglect or abuse regarding a student, the building principal shall obtain a proper identification from the authorities or officials. If a student interview is conducted on school grounds, the building principal or designee and such other school personnel as appropriate shall observe the interview.

If the law enforcement officer decides to remove the student from school, school officials shall provide the law enforcement authorities with the address and telephone number of the student's parent or guardian. The principal or other school official shall, as a condition of releasing the student to the law enforcement officer, require the officer to sign a statement certifying that the child is being removed from school premises because he or she is believed to be the victim of child abuse and that the officer understands and will comply with the legal requirements of NEB. REV. STAT. § 79-294.

Student Records

Student records will be shared with law enforcement officers only as allowed by state and federal law.

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