

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

October 2, 2019

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education
From: Jack R. Smith, Superintendent of Schools
Subject: Student Discipline and Parent/Guardian Notification (08-29-19-02-F)

During Board/Superintendent Comments, Ms. Smondrowski requested the following information:

Question

Ms. Smondrowski requested information regarding the protocol for contacting parents when a student has been involved in disciplinary incidents at school?

Response

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) strives to create positive school climates where students, parents/guardians, and all staff respectfully work together to maintain an orderly and safe learning environment focused on teaching and learning. Montgomery County Board of Education Policy JGA, *Student Discipline*, sets forth the expectation that MCPS schools will be environments that are conducive to learning. MCPS believes that discipline is a developmental process and effective discipline strategies should meet students' varied behavioral and developmental needs with tiered responses and interventions. A continuum of instructional strategies and disciplinary responses that supports teaching and learning, fosters positive behaviors, and reflects a restorative discipline philosophy is outlined in the *MCPS Student Code of Conduct*. When it is necessary for the principal/designee to respond to disciplinary infractions, it is expected that students, parents/guardians, teachers, and/or school staff are involved in discussions about the student's behavior and potential solutions that address social, academic, and personal issues related to the behavior.

MCPS Regulation JGA-RB, *Suspension and Expulsion*, and the *MCPS Student Code of Conduct* outline tiered responses based on the level of the incident. Parent/guardian communication through telephone calls, e-mail communications, and/or letters is a common theme at all levels. If the disciplinary infraction warrants a suspension or expulsion, the principal/designee will make every effort to notify the parent/guardian of the suspension preferably before removing the student from the school grounds, with consideration given to the age and developmental level

of the student. School administrators also are directed to make every effort to schedule a conference with the parent/guardian as soon as possible to review the incident and subsequent suspension.

Additionally, the Memorandum of Understanding between MCPS, local police departments, and the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office regarding the School Resource Officers Program and other law enforcement responses to school-based incidents, and Maryland state regulations, address topics such as arrests on school premises (Code of Maryland Regulations [COMAR] 13A.08.01.12) and police investigations involving questioning students on school premises (COMAR 13A.08.01.13). Under state law, law enforcements' questioning of students is prohibited on school premises "unless in connection with a crime committed on the premises or in connection with an investigation which, if not immediately permitted, would compromise the success of that investigation or endanger the lives or safety of the students or other persons, provided, however, that a school official should be present throughout that questioning." Whenever investigative questioning of students occurs on school premises, school staff is required to promptly notify the student's parent/guardian. There is an exception for questioning by Child Protective Services or law enforcement as part of an investigation of suspected child abuse, which is permitted on school property without parent/guardian notification.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Kimberly A. Statham, chief of school support and improvement, Office of School Support and Improvement, at 240-740-3100.

JRS:KAS:AML:kde

Copy to:
Executive Staff
Ms. Webb