



COATESVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICE DEPARTMENT

3030 C.G. Zinn Road
Thorndale, PA 19372
Police Station (484) 784-9118
Fax (484) 784-6010
Email police@casdschools.org

To: Coatesville Area School District Police Department
From: Frank J. Galbraith, Chief of Police/Director of School & Public Safety
Date: 08/01/2019
Re: *Police vs. Administrator Duties and Responsibilities*

On December 18, 2014, President Barack Obama signed an executive order establishing the Task Force on 21st Century Policing. The President charged the task force with identifying best practices and offering recommendations on how policing practices can promote effective crime reduction while building public trust. Many of those recommendations will sound familiar to those who pay attention to school climate debates: Police shouldn't be involved in routine discipline, officers should use a multi-sector approach to tackling youth criminal justice issues, the report says. *"noncriminal offenses can escalate to criminal charges very quickly"*.

I have outlined some clear boundaries for officers to follow and share with school administrators to ensure that our interactions with students stay positive and build trust so that discipline issues and issues of student misbehavior be left to administrators and educators.

Discipline vs. Criminal Activity

Is it appropriate to call Police Officers to a classroom if a student refuses to leave?

The school administrator can have a Police Officer accompany him/her to the classroom if it is believed that the Police Officer might need to remove the student. Prior to this, the administrator should utilize other support staff including a School Security Officer, school counselor, behaviorist, nurse, and other staff as needed. The Police Officer should be used as a last resort if the student fails to respond to other staff or presents a danger to themselves or others and/or has been placed on suspension. An administrator should document all non-police interventions used prior to the Police Officer's involvement.

Can a Police Officer respond to remove a child from a classroom (no crime committed, just oppositional defiance)?

This is not recommended unless the behavior of the student imposes a clear imminent danger to self or others. A Police Officer may accompany an administrator for support. At times, the positive relationship of a Police Officer with a student may be used as "leverage" to get a student to comply.

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Police Officer vs. Administrator Duties

Can an administrator call a Police Officer to enforce school rules for students running in the halls, walking the halls, leaving the lunchroom, or wearing hats in school or violating a school rule that doesn't violate Pennsylvania Criminal Law?

It is the responsibility of the school administrator to enforce routine disciplinary consequences for inappropriate behavior. Police Officers are not tasked with and shall not get involved in what should be routine discipline. School Security Officers are responsible for assisting the school administrators with enforcing the Student Code of Conduct.

What is a Police Officer's role if a student refuses to comply with an administrator and refuses to go to the office or classroom?

This is a school issue and relates to a low-level misbehavior. The school should use other interventions and supports as necessary to address the non-compliant behavior of the student. The Police Officer shall not be involved unless criminal behavior is observed. The role of the Police Officer should be to de-escalate every volatile situation while also providing support to the school administrator.

If a student leaves the school building, should the Police Officer be called to retrieve him/her?

Unless there is imminent danger to the student's well-being or safety, No! The administrator can inform the Police Officer of the situation. If a Police Officer observes a student leaving the building, the Police Officer should notify the administrator of the name of the student, but the student should not be retrieved or transported to school by the Police Officer.

Regards,



Frank Galbraith
Chief of Police

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