

GADSDEN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Administrative Procedures

Employee Intervention in Student Altercations

Florida law recognizes the responsibility and authority of school personnel to maintain order and protect students. Florida Statute 1003.32 provides teachers and instructional personnel the authority to manage student behavior, request immediate assistance when a student becomes uncontrollable or during an emergency, and use reasonable force, consistent with applicable standards, to protect themselves or others from injury. Florida Statute 1015.05 similarly recognizes a teacher's authority to take appropriate action to maintain a safe learning environment.

This does not mean that every employee is expected to physically place himself or herself between fighting students or take an action that creates an unreasonable risk of personal injury. However, every employee who witnesses a fight is expected to take immediate and reasonable action.

Depending upon the circumstances, these actions may include:

- Giving clear and firm verbal directions for students to stop;
- Immediately contact administration, school security, the school resource officer, or other appropriate personnel;
- Calling for additional assistance rather than attempting to handle a dangerous situation alone;
- Moving other students away from the altercation and securing the surrounding area;
- Taking reasonable action, consistent with training and district procedures, to protect a student who is at risk of injury;
- Remaining actively engaged in managing the situation until appropriate assistance arrives; and
- Taking reasonable steps to protect students until help arrives.

There is an important difference between employees choosing not to unnecessarily place himself or herself in harm's way and an employee choosing not to intervene. All faculty and staff are expected to take immediate and reasonable action consistent with their role, training, applicable law, and district procedures when a physical altercation or other student safety emergency occurs. **“Do not physically intervene, if you are not trained to do so” does not mean “do nothing.”**

This administrative procedure is consistent with F.S. 1003.32, 1006.09, 1006.11, and 1015.05.