

GUARDIAN PROGRAM

8.19

A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish the Guardian Program and outlines the selection, procedures, and training of guardians employed by the _____ County School District ("District").

B. Definitions

Guardian means any member of a designated employee group or a school safety guard in the District who has successfully completed all of the training requirements and prerequisites defined in F.S. 1006.12, and who has been appointed to serve as a guardian or school safety guard by the Superintendent. A candidate for the Guardian Program shall be a volunteer or a school safety guard and will receive a one-time stipend outlined in the statute. A volunteer Guardian will be offered no monetary benefit aside from the one-time stipend. The volunteer candidate must be a full-time employee of the District who is in good standing. Further, volunteer candidates shall not be employees exclusively performing classroom duties as teachers as defined in F.S. 1012.01(2)(a).

School Safety Specialist means the certified School Safety Specialist appointed by the Superintendent to oversee all security programs and personnel, as defined in F.S. 1006.07, to include oversight of appointed guardians.

Active Assailant/Armed Intruder is an individual(s) actively engaged in killing or attempting to use deadly physical force on other people in a confined and/or populated area.

C. Priorities and Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to define the procedures for application and approval as a volunteer guardian or a school safety guard. This will include the roles of guardians, define their supervision, and list additional training requirements that may be imposed by the District. The objective is to ensure that the use of guardians conforms to the standards of the District and that they serve to enhance the overall security of campuses throughout the District.

D. Responsibilities

1. School Safety Specialist

- a. The School Safety Specialist or designee, a representative from Safety and Security, Human Resources, School Principal, the _____ County Sheriff's Office ("CSO") and others, as appointed

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by the Superintendent, will be part of a District panel that will review all guardian applications for compliance with state law and District policy. The School Safety Specialist shall provide recommendations to the Superintendent for approval or denial of applicants based on their required background checks, drug screenings, evaluations, training as defined in F.S. 1006.12, and the panel's recommendation. The _____ County Sheriff's Office ("?CSO") must also approve all applicants.

- b. A designee from the ?CSO shall be responsible for inspecting all guardian equipment. Equipment may include firearms, ammunition, magazines, holsters, magazine holder, vests, radio, and identification. All equipment must be issued and approved by ?CSO and the District. Guardians and school safety guards accepting the issued equipment shall abide by all procedures and sign an agreement attesting that they will follow all applicable procedures and responsibilities. This agreement will be witnessed by the School Safety Specialist. Safety and Security, along with ?CSO will maintain all records of issued equipment.
- c. The School Safety Specialist and ?CSO shall inspect all guardian-issued equipment monthly to ensure serviceability and accounting. Each inspection shall be documented.
- d. The School Safety Specialist and ?CSO shall maintain or have access to the training records for each guardian. The record will contain their annual requalification dates and any additional training the District requires throughout the year. This may include additional firearms training, tactics, legal updates, or other areas specific to the duties of their position.
- e. The School Safety Specialist, in conjunction with Human Resources, shall notify the Superintendent of any guardian who is on medical leave, injured, suspended from their position for any reason, or unable to perform their duties as a guardian.
- f. The School Safety Specialist, as required in F.S. 1006.12, shall ensure the District notifies the ?CSO and the Office of Safe Schools within seventy-two (72) hours of any guardian being disciplined or dismissed for misconduct, or any incident where a guardian discharges their firearm for other than training purposes.

2. School Guardians

- a. To be appointed as a guardian or school safety guard, a designated employee must be in good standing with the District, and must

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meet the eligibility requirements for a guardian, as defined in F.S. 1006.12.

- b. A volunteer candidate must make an initial application to the Superintendent or designee. This will be done in the form of a memorandum, which shall outline the qualifications and willingness to volunteer for the program. A candidate applying for a School Safety Guard position will apply when a position becomes available by applying for the position on the district webpage.
- c. A panel consisting of representatives from Safety and Security, Human Resources, School Principal, ?CSO and others, as appointed by the Superintendent or designee are responsible for reviewing all guardian applications, and to ensure compliance with State law and District policy. The panel shall provide recommendations to the Superintendent or designee to move forward in the application process. The Superintendent or designee may accept the recommendation of the panel or deny the recommendation. Denials shall not be arbitrary or capricious. Denials should be based on concerns such as, but not limited to, the inability to secure liability coverage for the individual, newly found information or the applicant's current position could create a negative impact on the school district being a Guardian.
- d. If the application is approved by the Superintendent to move forward in the process, the employee will be contacted by the School Safety Specialist to complete any required paperwork for the ?CSO.
- e. Once the guardian or school safety guard is approved, the employee will be scheduled for a background check that includes a polygraph, psychological evaluation, and drug screening. The employee will also undergo the required statutory training and any other requirements set forth by the ?CSO.
- f. All training requirements as outlined by the ?CSO must be met. Failing to attend a required training session or any program components will result in immediate non-approval of the applicant or the termination of the guardian or school safety guard.
- g. The District will treat all required training hours as temporary duty as outlined and in compliance with applicable standards as prescribed in District leave policies.
- h. Upon successful completion of the ?CSO's training program, the applicants shall present to the Superintendent their certification as

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provided by the ?CSO as proof of completing all requirements outlined in F.S. 1006.07 and other requirements as designated by the ?CSO. Upon receipt, the Superintendent may appoint the applicant as a guardian. However, even if proof of completion is received, the final decision to appoint an individual as a guardian is left solely to the discretion of the Superintendent. The Superintendent's decision is final and not appealable. However, the appointment cannot be made in an arbitrary nor capricious manner. All acceptances or denials shall be accompanied by the appropriate documentation that supports the decision.

- i. Appointed guardians and school safety guards will participate in all mandated continuing training and related activities throughout the school year and will complete the mandatory recertification.
- j. Appointed guardians and school safety guards will remain knowledgeable of current processes and procedures pertinent to the Guardian Program through continued education, seminars, and training.
- k. Appointed guardians and school safety guards will assist law enforcement agencies and staff in the identification, deterrence, mitigation, and prosecution of subjects that affect the security and safety of students, staff, and visitors on the school property.
- l. Appointed guardians and school safety guards will cooperate with ?CSO, the State Attorney's Office, Child Protective Services, and other State and Federal agencies in the interest of public safety.
- m. Appointed guardians and school safety guards shall adhere to safety rules and procedures.
- n. Appointed guardians and school safety guards will be issued firearms and related equipment. Only the approved firearm by the ?CSO is authorized for carry while carrying out the duties of a guardian. It shall be worn in an approved manner as directed. No weapons or equipment other than what is issued or approved items and signed for in the agreement shall be carried or utilized by a guardian at schools or on school property.
- o. All issued firearms shall be maintained in good working condition and cleaned as often as necessary to ensure proper operation. There shall be no alterations or modifications to the issued firearm. Appointed guardians are responsible for the general maintenance and care of issued firearms.

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- p. Issued firearms and ammunition shall be properly possessed, retained, and stored at all times, per F.S. 790.174.
- q. Easily identifiable attire or uniform will be issued to guardians.
- r. Guardians and school safety guards shall not act as law enforcement officers and do not possess any of the authorities of a law enforcement officer. Guardians and school safety guards are not authorized by the District and ?CSO to enforce any laws. The purpose of a guardian is to defend life from an active threat on any District property. Guardians are responsible for providing security and safety services at schools or school property and protecting the life and well-being of students, staff, and visitors.
- s. In accordance with the guardian's training, they shall respond singularly to defend life. Should other guardians, school safety guards, or law enforcement be present, they can respond as a group and are authorized to defend any school or school property from an active threat. Guardians and school safety guards are to use reasonable/appropriate level of force to stop, disrupt, or eliminate possible life-threatening physical threats to students, staff, and visitors on school property.
- t. Appointed guardians and school safety guards will follow federal and state laws. Guardians and school safety guards are employees of the School District and shall adhere to all Board policies and procedures.
- u. Any guardian or school safety guard who fires their weapon for any reason other than on the firing range for training, must be reported to the School Safety Specialist or designee immediately. The guardian or school safety guard involved in such a situation shall cooperate with any subsequent law enforcement and/or District investigation. Failure to cooperate with any District investigation may result in disciplinary action, including termination from the Guardian Program and/or the District.
- v. Guardians and school safety guards will only be permitted to carry issued firearms and any assigned equipment while on duty at the assigned school during their assigned hours. Guardians or school safety guards will not carry issued firearms or equipment out of school or school property. Issued firearm, ammunition, and equipment shall be stored in the guardian's or school safety guard domicile per statute. Issued firearm and related equipment shall be secured in a vehicle lock box while traveling to and from their

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residence.

- w. All appointed guardians or school safety guard will treat all information or intelligence of a possible or ongoing investigation received as confidential, including but not limited to information or intelligence received via all sources such as, telephone, mobile phone, texting, computer, social media, etc. The dissemination of such confidential information or intelligence to anyone not needing to know, such as ?CSO, School Safety Specialist, or certain individuals in school administration (persons not directly involved in any internal, non-criminal, or criminal investigation) is strictly prohibited.
- x. Appointed guardians and school safety guards shall contact the Safety and Security Specialist, School Resource Deputy ("SRD"), School Principal and/or Principal's designee, for a situation or incident that is not under their authority or responsibility.
- y. Appointed guardians and school safety guards shall work with law enforcement officers by sharing relevant information and intelligence regarding threats and incidents related to the safety and security of the students, staff, visitors, and others on campus.
- z. Any violation of these directives will result in termination from the Guardian Program and, possibly, termination of employment with the District.

E. General Procedures

1. Pursuant to F.S. 30.15, each Sheriff may establish a Coach Chris Hixon, Coach Aaron Feis, and Coach Scott Beigel Guardian Program, in which certain volunteer school employees will be appointed as school guardians.
2. Pursuant to F.S. 30.15, a guardian or school safety guard has no authority to act in any law enforcement capacity except to the extent necessary to prevent or abate an active assailant incident on school premises. Appointed guardians will report directly to the School Safety Specialist.
3. Pursuant to F.S. 1006.12, in the event of the discharge of a firearm by any Safe School Officer, including a guardian, the School Safety Specialist shall notify the ?CSO immediately after the incident. Additionally, the School Safety Specialist will notify the Florida Department of Education Office of Safe Schools in writing via an Incident Report in the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool portal immediately but no later than seventy-two (72) hours after the incident.

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4. Pursuant to F.S. 1006.12, in the event a guardian or school safety guard is dismissed from the program, District or is otherwise disciplined, the School Safety Specialist will notify the Florida Department of Education Office of Safe Schools in writing via an Incident Report in the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool portal immediately but no later than seventy-two (72) hours after the incident.
5. Pursuant to F.S. 1003.32, and F.S. 1006.09, the management of student discipline is the responsibility of the school principal or principal's designee. A volunteer guardian can be considered a principal's designee based on their current position with the District.
6. Pursuant to F.S. 776.012, a guardian or school safety guard is justified in using objectively reasonable force, except deadly force, if present during a physical altercation between individuals on his/her assigned school campus. Intervention is to be the minimum force required to de-escalate the incident and to keep the individuals and campus safe. Administration and SRD are to be notified immediately.
7. Firearms shall not be displayed or handled in any unsafe manner that may cause concern.
8. Issued firearm will remain holstered at all times except when needed in authorized duties or for training, inspection, cleaning, and repair purposes.
9. Issued firearms shall not be utilized for anything other than authorized appointed guardian duties and training purposes.
10. Appointed guardians and school safety guards will not draw and point their issued firearm at any individual unless they reasonably believe that the individual has engaged or is about to engage in any active deadly threat. If the appointed guardian displays an issued firearm or points it at an individual for any other reason, then they will notify the Safety and Security Specialist, SRD, and the School Principal or Principal's designee must be notified immediately, and document the circumstances in a written report.

Guardians and safety guards must attend all training scheduled by the District or the CSO, keep all their equipment in serviceable condition, pass firearms qualification at least annually as required by state law, and maintain their position within the District in good standing.

The guardian training program must include twelve (12) hours about responding to and de-escalating incidents on school premises.

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The District must report to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) the name, date of birth, and appointment date of each person appointed as a guardian, as well as the date of separation if a guardian or school safety guard leaves the assignment.

Upon termination of employment, volunteer guardian status is terminated, and all issued equipment must be returned immediately and appropriately to the School Safety Specialist or his/her designee. At any point, a volunteer guardian designation can be withdrawn by the Superintendent with or without cause and with no appeal rights.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY:

1001.41, 1001.42, 1003.01,
1003.02 1003.32, F.S.

LAW(S) IMPLEMENTED:

30.15, 776.012, 790.174, 1006.07,
1006.09, 1006.12, 1012.01(2)(a), F.S.

HISTORY:

ADOPTED: _____
REVISION DATE(S): _____
FORMERLY: