The School Discipline Process: A Guide for Parents

Our goal is to ensure a safe, supportive, and successful learning environment for every student. When behavioral issues arise, our process is built on **fairness, thoroughness, and restorative action**.

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1. Reporting a Concern: Following the Chain of Command

When you have a concern or a report of a student-related issue, please follow our established chain of communication. This ensures the issue is addressed at the most appropriate level first.

Step	Who to Contact	Purpose
First Contact	**Classroom Teacher** or **Involved Staff Member**	Most issues are best resolved at the classroom level. The teacher has the best context.
Next Step	**School Administration** (Principal/Assistant Principal)	Contact if you feel the situation was not addressed appropriately or if the issue is severe and requires immediate administrative attention.

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2. Administrative Review and Investigation

Once a concern has been reported to school administration, the following steps are taken:

Phase 1: Information Gathering

Step	Action Taken	Focus/Goal
1.	**Initial Interviews**	**Accusing/Reporting Parties:** Collect information and perspectives from the student/staff who reported the issue.
2.	**Subsequent Interviews**	**All Other Involved Parties:** Interview the accused student(s) and any witnesses **independently**. This prevents influencing testimony and ensures accuracy.
3.	**Evidence Review**	Review all gathered information (interviews, documents, video footage, etc.) to determine the facts of the incident.

Phase 2: Determination & Resolution

Step	Action Taken	Focus/Goal
4.	**Determination of Next Steps**	Administration determines if a school rule was violated. If so, what **Consequence** (based on the Board Policy), **Retribution**, and **Restorative Measures** are needed?
5.	**Restorative Conversation**	Administration facilitates a conversation between the involved parties, focused on understanding the impact of their actions, accountability, and how to repair the harm caused.

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3. Communication and Documentation

Transparency and clear communication are key to building trust.

Step	Action Taken	Documentation
1.	**Parent Contact**	All parents of students involved in the incident are contacted by administration to discuss the process, findings, and resolution.
2.	**Documentation**	All communication, investigations, findings, and consequences are documented in the student's official record (Skyward System).

3.	Follow-Up	Administration can schedule follow-up meetings if parents have additional concerns or questions after the resolution has been communicated.

Key Principles

- **Due Process:** The accused student is given the opportunity to share their side of the story before any decision on discipline is made.
- **Restoration:** Our priority is to move beyond punishment toward teaching students to take responsibility for their actions and repair relationships within the school community.
- **Consistency:** Decisions on consequences are guided by the Stark County Elementary School Student Handbook/Code of Conduct.

Keeping Our Stark County Schools Safe: Your Guide to "See Something, Say Something"

The Threat Assessment Team Process

Creating a safe and supportive learning environment is a responsibility we all share. At Stark County Schools, we believe that safety is a partnership between students, staff, and parents. When we work together and look out for one another, we build a stronger and more secure community for everyone. It's important to remember that when you report a concern, you are taking a brave and positive step to help someone; reporting is an "act of caring and not 'snitching' or 'tattling'."

This guide will help you understand what to look for and how to share your concerns.

1. What Kinds of Things Should I Report?

A "threat" isn't always a direct statement. It can be any behavior or communication that makes you worry about the safety of yourself, a friend, or others at school. If something feels off or makes you concerned, it's worth paying attention to.

Examples of concerning behaviors to look out for:

- A friend who suddenly isolates themselves from their peers and family.
- Someone who is usually friendly and positive suddenly seems very down or depressed.
- Sudden outbursts of anger that seem to come out of nowhere.
- Seeming much more frustrated, agitated, or angry than usual.
- Frequently blaming or accusing others for their problems.
- An unusual fascination with weapons.
- Talking about violence as a way to solve problems.

If you see or hear something that worries you, taking the next step is simple and makes a real difference.

2. How to "Say Something": A Simple 3-Step Guide

Making a report is straightforward and confidential. The most important thing is to tell an adult you trust at school.

1. **Find a trusted adult.** This can be *any* staff member at your school. You can talk to a teacher, the principal, office personnel, a counselor, a custodian, or any other school employee you feel comfortable with.
2. **Tell them what you know.** You can share your concerns by talking to the staff member directly or by writing them a note. Just explain what you saw, heard, or what is worrying you.
3. **Know your report will be taken seriously.** Every single report is important. The staff member you talk to will immediately share the information with the school administrator so that the school's dedicated team can begin to help.

So, what happens after you've bravely made a report?

3. What Happens Next? A Fair and Caring Process

Once a concern is reported, the school follows a careful and structured process to understand the situation and provide support. The goal is always to ensure safety and help the students involved.

1. **A Special Team Reviews the Concern.** Every report is reviewed by a dedicated "Threat Assessment Team" made up of trained school professionals, such as the principal, a school social worker, and a school counselor.
2. **Gathering Information.** The team carefully and respectfully learns more about the situation. This involves reviewing information and talking with people who can provide more context about the concern.

3. **Understanding the Situation.** The team's primary goal is to understand the student's behavior and determine if there is a low, moderate, or high risk of harm to themselves or others. This helps them figure out what kind of support might be needed.
4. **Creating a Plan to Help.** Based on what they learn, the team creates a plan to keep everyone safe and to support the student of concern. This plan can include help from school resources (like counseling), connecting the student with community services, or, if a school rule has been broken, appropriate disciplinary action.
5. **Monitoring and Follow-Up.** The team continues to monitor the situation to make sure the support plan is working and that the concern has been resolved.

Your Privacy is Protected: To protect student privacy, all records from this process are kept confidential and stored securely. They are **not** placed in a student's permanent educational record file.

This entire process is built on a foundation of trust and support for every student.

4. Our Promise: A Safe School for Everyone

The "See Something, Say Something" process is designed to *help* students, not just to punish them. Our school district is dedicated to handling every report and every situation in a "fair, ethical, and lawful way." By working together, we can ensure that our schools remain safe, caring, and positive places for everyone to learn and grow.

5. Important Resources

Emergency Help is Always Available

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Dial 988