

2600 – North County Charter School Safety and Security

A. Releasing a Student from School

The organization is concerned about the safety of our students. Students will only be released to people who are their parents or legal guardians, unless we have received written permission to release the student to another adult, and that adult's name is entered into the Student Information System as an approved contact. In the case of divorce or separation of the parents, both parents shall have full rights until legal notification is provided to the school limiting the rights of either parent.

B. Relations with Law Enforcement Authorities

It is the organization's policy to cooperate fully with law enforcement agencies in promoting the welfare of students, staff and the community. In accordance with Florida law, an Indian River County Sheriff's Deputy, or designated School Resource Deputy (SRD) will be present on campus from the time gates open and close for the regular school day session.

Child Abuse, Molestation, Neglect

The organization considers the welfare of students to be of paramount concern in its responsibilities. Therefore, all organization employees and volunteers are directed to take whatever action may be necessary as required by Chapter 39, and 827 F.S. and all statutes and laws of the state of Florida as regards to all instances of suspected child abuse, molestation and child neglect. We are a reporting agency, and not an investigatory entity. Therefore, NCCS administration and staff will not discuss reports made to law enforcement or the Department of Children & Families with any individual that may be the subject of, or reason for the report.

Any employee of the organization or volunteer who has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse shall immediately make an oral report to the Department of Children and Families Abuse and Neglect Hotline. A person who is required to report known or suspected child abuse, abandonment, or neglect and who knowingly and willfully fails to do so, or who knowingly and willfully prevents another person from doing so, is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083. Further, a person who does make a report of suspected abuse in good faith has immunity from civil and criminal liability pursuant to § 39.203, F.S. The person making the call shall notify the Principal, or designee immediately. Any person who reports should keep a record of the date and time they made the report, whom they spoke to and the general information they provided to the Abuse Hotline. The school Principal should maintain records of the report but these should not be placed in a student cumulative folder.

The report shall be made under the following circumstances: When there is reasonable cause to suspect that child abuse or maltreatment has been inflicted through willful or negligent acts which result in neglect, malnutrition, sexual abuse, physical injury, or mental injury. Neglect is a failure to provide sustenance, clothing, shelter or medical condition. Abuse or maltreatment may also include aiding, abetting, counseling, hiring or procuring a child to perform or participate in any photographic motion picture, exhibition show, representation or other presentation which, in whole or in part, depicts sexual conduct, sexual excitement or masochistic abuse involving a child as defined by law.

Interviews, Interrogations and/or Removal from School by Law Enforcement, and Department of Children and Families Investigations

Law enforcement interview, interrogation or removals - The school has legal jurisdiction over students during the school day and hours of approved extracurricular activities. The school administration is responsible for making an effort to protect each student's rights with respect to interrogations by law enforcement officials.

When law enforcement officials find it necessary to question students during the school day or periods of extracurricular activities, the school Principal, or designee will be present and the interview will be conducted in private. Additionally, unless the parent or legal guardian is the subject of law enforcement investigation, a reasonable effort will be made by the administration to notify the parent/guardian of law enforcement's request, or conduct of interviews on campus or during school-sponsored activities.

Removal of Student from School by Law Enforcement - Before a student at school is arrested or taken into custody by law enforcement or other legally authorized person, the school Principal, or designee will verify the official's authority to take custody of the student. The school Principal, or designee will also make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parent/guardian that the student is being removed from school.

Department of Children & Families Investigations or Removals-The school Principal, or designee will not be present for DCF interviews related to neglect or abuse investigations; however, the Principal or designee will verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and request an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school before providing time, space and access to the student(s). Further, the SRD will be notified when DCF officials arrive or request to use school time and/or facilities to conduct interviews, so that the SRD may check/verify if the circumstance has any possible crime associated with it.

Reporting Violent Behavior

The organization requires school administrators to report acts of school violence to teachers and other employees who are directly responsible for the student's education or who interact with the student in the performance of the employee's duties. School administrators will also disclose to appropriate staff members portions of any student's individualized education program that is related to past or potentially future violent behavior. Violent behavior and the phrase acts of school violence are defined as the use of physical force by a student with the intent to do serious physical injury to another person while on school property, including a school bus, or while involved in school activities.

In addition, the school Principal or designee will report to law enforcement officials, as soon as is reasonably practicable, the commission of any of the acts or related juvenile offenses which are committed on school property, including school buses, or while involved in school activities.

C. Searches by School Personnel

In accordance with the state and federal law, should a school administrator have reasonable suspicion that a crime or violation of school rules has occurred; the administrator has the authority to conduct an appropriate search. In cases where an immediate action may be necessary to secure a dangerous item, such as a fire arm, a knife, or harmful substance, any staff member may secure a student's property immediately, and restrain an individual to accomplish an immediate search.

Reasonable suspicion is defined to mean that the person initiating the search has a well-founded suspicion -- based on objective facts that can be articulated -- of either criminal activity, threat or a violation of school rules. Reasonable suspicion is more than a mere hunch or supposition.

If reasonable suspicion exists, and if the administration can justify the search at its inception, a reasonable search can be conducted to prove or disapprove the stated suspicion.

School property, such as student lockers, desks, computers or other devices may be searched by school administrators or staff who have a reasonable suspicion that they contain dangerous items, drugs, alcohol, or other materials that violate school rules, or that may pose a danger to the health or safety of students and school employees. In addition, the board authorizes the use of trained dogs to sniff lockers or other school

property to assist in the detection of the presence of drugs, explosives, and other contraband. The board does not need reasonable suspicion to utilize drug sniffing dogs.

Students or student property may be searched based on reasonable suspicion of a violation of school rules, policy or state law. The privacy and dignity of students shall be respected. Searches shall be carried out in the presence of adult witnesses, preferably both the individual conducting the search and the witness will be of the same gender as the student. Students may be asked to empty pockets, remove jackets, coats, shoes and other articles of exterior clothing for examination if reasonable under the circumstances. No employee shall perform a strip search of any student, where undergarments would be revealed, or removed. Law enforcement should be contacted, and the student should be kept under very close surveillance, if it is felt that an additional search might be necessary to secure a dangerous item on campus.

Law enforcement officials shall be contacted if the search produces a controlled substance, drug paraphernalia, weapons, stolen goods or evidence of a crime, in any case involving a violation of law when a student refuses to allow a search, or where the search cannot safely be conducted. Parents may also be contacted, when it is reasonable and prudent to do so.

D. Non-Employee Access to NCCS Facilities

Normal School Day (Including Before and After Care Program-7AM to 6PM)-Non-Employees who are visitors to the school may not enter the campus until properly admitted through the main office by showing a proper ID (e.g. FL Driver's License) that may be successfully run through a check with the Raptor System. A visitor pass sticker will be issued, and the visitor must wear it prominently displayed on their chest in plain sight for the duration of the visit. If the office is not open (normal hours are 8AM to 4:30PM), or the office is not manned by an individual who can properly use the Raptor system, visitors may not be admitted onto the premises, with the following exceptions:

1-An employee meets the visitor at the front gate, escorts and maintains physical proximity to the visitor during the entire visit until they depart (e.g. A parent conference before or after school or a Before or After Care Parent).

****IMPORTANT: At NO TIME shall such visitors be allowed to supervise, or be left alone with any student, unless it is their own child. Approved volunteers with proper fingerprinting/background check authorization may be granted supervisory responsibilities under certain conditions, under the auspices of an employee.***

After School Events-Non-Employees attending events after school hours shall be expected to adhere to the following expectations:

Visitors who are spectators attending after school events such as drama productions, student demonstrations, academic fairs, graduations/celebrations, or orientation-type events may be admitted onto campus under the supervision of administration and/or appropriate approved staff; however, will be required to enter their name onto a sign-in list to verify and record their attendance. ***At no time shall they be allowed to supervise or be alone with any student other than their own child(ren).***

Visitors who are allowed to chaperone or help as a volunteer at a special event such as a dance, or student activity shall be placed on a list approved in advance by the administration, and shall meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. Possess valid and up to date fingerprinting/background check and be on the school's current approved volunteer list; OR

2. Be scanned through raptor and provided a proper visitor pass by an approved employee. Visitors who are not fingerprinted and who are not on the approved volunteer list MAY NOT be placed solely in charge of any student or group of students. An administrator or school employee must be present, and hold the supervisory responsibility. A volunteer may never be in charge of a visitor working with students, other than their own child(ren).

****IMPORTANT: All chaperones and volunteers for any event must be on an approved (by administration) list prior to the start of an after school activity. Once the list is approved, NO OTHER ADDITIONS to the list may be made without permission granted by an administrator, and no other visitor will be allowed through the school's gate to be on campus. Parents, or designees picking up children MUST wait outside the main gate when picking up their child. They will not be allowed through the gate.***

****IMPORTANT: Any chaperone or visitor that violates school policies or safety rules (e.g. using tobacco products on campus, participating in an unsafe act or removing a student from the supervision of authorized personnel), or who enters the premises under the influence of alcohol or drugs, will immediately be removed from campus, reported to law enforcement and likely be legally trespassed by the Indian River Sheriff's Department upon request for such action by the Director/Principal, and for an indefinite period of time.***

Last, in keeping with generally established protocols for qualifying to volunteer at NCCS, any regular visitor performing a re-occurring role is to be properly placed formally on the volunteer list once vetted and approved by administration. This includes classroom volunteers, cafeteria volunteers, playground volunteers, field trip chaperones and other roles approved by the Director/Principal.

Adopted: May, 2023

Updated: March 11, 2024 (To Add Part D)