

Renville County West School District Policy #501

School Weapons Policy

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to assure a safe school environment for students, staff and the public.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

No student or nonstudent, including adults and visitors, shall possess, use or distribute a weapon when in a school location. The school district will act to enforce this policy and to discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, school employee, volunteer, or member of the public who violates this policy.

III. DEFINITION

A. “Weapon”

1. A “weapon” means any object, device or instrument designed as a weapon or through its use is capable of threatening or producing bodily harm or which may be used to inflict self-injury including, but not limited to, any firearm, whether loaded or unloaded; airguns; pellet guns; BB guns; all knives; blades; clubs; metal knuckles; numchucks; throwing stars; explosives; fireworks; mace and other propellants; stunguns; ammunition; poisons; chains; arrows; and objects that have been modified to serve as a weapon.
2. No person shall possess, use or distribute any object, device or instrument having the appearance of a weapon and such objects, devices or instruments shall be treated as weapons including, but not limited to, weapons listed above which are broken or non-functional, look-alike guns; toy guns; and any object that is a facsimile of a real weapon.
3. No person shall use articles designed for other purposes (i.e., lasers or laser pointers, belts, combs, pencils, files, scissors, etc.), to inflict bodily harm and/or intimidate and such use will be treated as the possession and use of a weapon.

B. “School Location” includes any school building or grounds, whether leased, rented, owned or controlled by the school, locations of school activities or trips, bus stops, school buses or school vehicles, school-contracted vehicles, the area of entrance or departure from school premises or events, all locations where school-related functions are conducted, and anywhere students are under the jurisdiction of the school district.

C. “Possession” means having a weapon on one’s person or in an area subject to one’s control in a school location.

IV. EXCEPTIONS

A. A student who finds a weapon on the way to school or in a school location, or a student who discovers that he or she accidentally has a weapon in his or her possession, and takes the weapon immediately to the principal’s office shall not be considered to possess a weapon. If it would be impractical or dangerous to take the weapon to the principal’s office, a student shall not be considered to possess a weapon if he or she immediately turns the weapon over to an administrator, teacher or head coach or immediately notifies an administrator, teacher or head coach of the weapon’s location.

B. It shall not be a violation of this policy if a nonstudent falls within one of the following categories:

1. licensed peace officers, military personnel, or students participating in military training,

- who are performing official duties;
- 2. persons who carry pistols according to the terms of a permit;
- 3. persons who keep or store in a motor vehicle pistols in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, Sections 624.714 and 624.715 or other firearms in accordance with Section 97B.045;
 - a. Section 624.714 specifies procedures and standards for obtaining pistol permits and penalties for the failure to do so. Section 624.715 defines an exception to the pistol permit requirements for “antique firearms which are carried or possessed as curiosities or for their historical significance or value.”
 - b. Section 97B.045 generally provides that a firearm may not be transported in a motor vehicle unless it is (1) unloaded and in a gun case without any portion of the firearm exposed; or (2) unloaded and in the closed trunk.
- 4. firearm safety or marksmanship courses or activities conducted on school property;
- 5. possession of dangerous weapons, BB guns, or replica firearms by a ceremonial color guard;
- 6. a gun or knife show held on school property; or
- 7. possession of dangerous weapons, BB guns, or replica firearms with written permission of the principal.

[NOTE: Nothing prevents a school district from being more stringent in its weapons policy than the criminal law. Although some school districts may choose to incorporate all of the exceptions to the criminal law, other school districts may choose either not to incorporate some or all of the exceptions or to further limit them. For example, a school district may choose not to incorporate exception (2) to Section 609.66, Subdivision 1d. Accordingly, a person would violate the school district’s weapons policy if he or she possessed a pistol in a school location, even if the person is carrying the pistol pursuant to a valid permit and would not be committing a crime. Similarly, a school district may choose to require written permission from the superintendent, not just a principal, for someone to possess a dangerous weapon in a school location. This would impose a more stringent requirement than exception (7) to Section 609.66, Subdivision 1d.]

C. Policy Application to Instructional Equipment/Tools.

While the school district does not allow the possession, use or distribution of weapons by students, or nonstudents, such a position is not meant to interfere with instruction or the use of appropriate equipment and tools by students or nonstudents. Such equipment and tools, when properly possessed, used and stored, shall not be considered in violation of the rule against the possession, use or distribution of weapons. However, when authorized instructional and work equipment and tools are used in a potentially dangerous or threatening manner, such possession and use will be treated as the possession and use of a weapon.

V. CONSEQUENCES FOR STUDENT WEAPON POSSESSION/USE/DISTRIBUTION

- A. The school district does not allow the possession, use or distribution of weapons by students. Consequently, the minimum consequence for students possessing, using or distributing weapons shall include:
 - 1. immediate out-of-school suspension;
 - 2. confiscation of the weapon;

3. immediate notification of police;
 4. parent or guardian notification; and
 5. recommendation to the superintendent of dismissal for a period of time not to exceed one year.
- B. Pursuant to Minnesota law, a student who brings a firearm, as defined by federal law, to school will be expelled for at least one year. The school board may modify this requirement on a case-by-case basis.

C. Administrative Discretion

While the school district does not allow the possession, use, or distribution of weapons by students, the superintendent may use discretion in determining whether, under the circumstances, a course of action other than the minimum consequences specified above is warranted. If so, other appropriate action may be taken, including consideration of a recommendation for lesser discipline.

VI. CONSEQUENCES FOR WEAPON POSSESSION/USE/DISTRIBUTION BY NONSTUDENTS

A. Employees.

1. An employee who violates the terms of this policy is subject to disciplinary action, including nonrenewal, suspension, or discharge as deemed appropriate by the school board.
2. Sanctions against employees, including nonrenewal, suspension, or discharge shall be pursuant to and in accordance with applicable statutory authority, collective bargaining agreements, and school district policies.
3. When an employee violates the weapons policy, law enforcement may be notified, as appropriate.

B. Other Nonstudents.

1. Any member of the public who violates this policy shall be informed of the policy and asked to leave the school location. Depending on the circumstances, the person may be barred from future entry to school locations. In addition, if the person is a student in another school district, that school district may be contacted concerning the policy violation.
2. If appropriate, law enforcement will be notified of the policy violation by the member of the public and may be asked to provide an escort to remove the member of the public from the school location.

Legal References:

Minn. Stat. §§ 121A.40-121A.56 (Pupil Fair Dismissal Act)
Minn. Stat. § 121A.44 (expulsion for possession of firearm)
Minn. Stat. § 121A.05 (referral to police)
Minn. Stat. § 609.66 (dangerous weapons)
Minn. Stat. § 609.605 (trespass)
Minn. Stat. § 609.02, Subd. 6 (definition of dangerous weapon)
Minn. Stat. § 97B.045 (transportation of firearms)
Minn. Stat. § 624.714 (carrying of weapons without permit; penalties)
Minn. Stat. § 624.715 (exemptions; antiques and ornaments)
18 U.S.C. § 921 (definition of firearm)