



**Guidelines for Notifying Parents/Guardians whose Student(s) are the Subject of Threats of Violence or Harm**

HB 3444 is in effect as of October 23, 1999, and requires that school districts notify parents of students whose names appear on a targeted list (hit list) or when threats of violence or harm are made by another student. The law similarly requires notification of school employees whose names appear on a targeted list. An attempt to notify by phone or in person must be made within 12 hours of discovery of the threat; written notification must be sent within 24 hours.

The guidelines and sample notices are intended to help you with these requirements:

1. Be sure that all your students and staff know that words and actions that threaten other people at school are inappropriate, even in jest or among friends that they will be taken seriously, and they are a discipline issue. PPS discipline handbooks, and guides address this subject.
2. When a threat is made, complete [Threat of Violence or Harm Screening](#) tool and action plan. Consider the following in determining how to notify:
  - a. **Investigation:**
    - Age/developmental level of the child -- most children by age eight or nine can understand that threats are not acceptable.
    - Pattern of behavior -- What has happened in the past? Is this behavior part of a child's history? Are there special education considerations?
    - Threatened person's perception -- Would a reasonable person feel threatened? Would another child in similar circumstances feel threatened? If so, it's a threat, regardless of intent.
    - Threatening student's perception/parent perception -- Why did the person make the threat? Has there been teasing or harassment by the person who was threatened? Is it mutual? Reciprocal? Were there words spoken in anger which now no longer exists? What is the relationship? Does the student understand and accept that he or she cannot make threats, even in jest?
  - b. **Disciplinary Action** -- As with any conduct that violates District behavior expectations, there is a range of consequences for threats, from Level 1 Conference to Level 6 Federally Mandated Expulsion.
  - c. **Notification**
    - Confidentiality -- Generally our practice is to protect the privacy of all students in disciplinary actions. This state law will change that practice in instances regarding a threat or a hit list.
    - Duty to Warn -- In cases involving a threat or a hit list, safety concerns outweigh a student's right to privacy.
    - Backed by this law (HB 3444) which requires parental notification, school officials shall not be held liable for any civil claim arising out of the notification. Err on the side of safety.
    - Notify by phone or in person within 12 hours of learning of the threat, if possible.
    - Notify in writing within 24 hours.
    - Any details that are shared should be done calmly, carefully, and through personal contact, not in writing. Escalating a situation in which threats have been made is to be avoided.

During the contact, address these points:

- Inform parents that threats of any kind are taken seriously and that we are required by law to notify that a threat has been made.
  - Give parents the facts they need for safety's sake. Our duty to warn is the first priority. Whether the identity of the threatener should be disclosed to parents depends on the likelihood of serious injury and other safety factors.
  - Let them know what steps have been taken to resolve any issues that led to the threat (contracts, conflict resolution, mediation, support from school and community, for example).
  - Reassure them that disciplinary measures are being taken, even though you cannot share all the details about discipline or other personal information.
  - Encourage them to share their concerns, and to work through the school and Portland Police, School Police Division to promote safety.
  - Let them know you are committed to their child's safety without promising or guaranteeing that safety is ensured.
3. When in doubt, consult:
- a. Student Services
  - b. Student Conduct Manager
  - c. Senior Director
  - d. School Security
  - e. Another Principal
  - f. PPS Legal Counsel Office

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4. School districts shall notify:
- a. The parent of a student:
    - When the student's name appears on a targeted list that threatens violence or harm to the students on the list; or
    - When threats of violence or harm to the student are made by another student; and
  - b. Any school employee whose name appears on a targeted list threatening violence or harm to the school employee.
5. School districts shall attempt to notify the threatened persons by telephone or in person within 12 hours of discovering the targeted list or learning of the threat. School districts shall follow up this notice with a written notification sent within 24 hours of discovering the targeted list or learning of the threat.
6. School districts, school district boards, and public school officials providing notice as required by subsection HB 3444 shall not be held liable for any civil claim arising out of the notification.