

Millard School District

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March 24, 2022

To Millard School District Patrons:

In light of the "Safe School" situation that was reported within our district on March 23, and in response to questions regarding the practices we follow in such cases, we felt it might be helpful to share the process with you that we follow in all such situations.

Safe school violations come in a variety of sizes and severity. Millard School District Policy 6090, Safe Schools, gives very clear guidelines regarding the removal of students who are involved in the most severe cases. Any student that commits one of the offenses that is listed under CONDUCT WHICH REQUIRES 1-YEAR EXPULSION, (MSD policy 6090, Letter C), is removed from school for one year. This initiates a process which includes school and district personnel, along with law enforcement performing an in-depth risk analysis of the student. While this process is not generally visible to the public, it takes place in every case that is referred to the superintendent. Included in this process are the school psychologist and social worker, as well as those individuals who work closely with and are acquainted with the student. Also included are the school and law enforcement personnel conducting the investigation to determine the details of the situation, and whether criminal charges should be filed. Based on these investigations, recommendations are made to the District Office and the Sheriff's Office.

All this information is compiled before the student and his/her parents have their initial meeting with the superintendent. This process generally takes a week or more, during which time the student is not allowed to attend school functions. The superintendent is presented with all of the information and is able to confer with mental health and law enforcement professionals. The superintendent then visits with the student and their parents to present them the facts of the situation and to assess the family situation and possible supports that could be available in dealing with the situation. In these meetings, the one-year suspension remains in place unless the superintendent determines on a case-by-case basis that a lesser penalty would be appropriate. In many cases the penalty is shortened, but wherever appropriate, additional safeguards are put into place such as a psychiatric evaluation, required counseling, person and/or backpack checks, or special supervision in order for a student to return to school.

No student returns to school until it is determined that there is an extremely low level of risk in our doing so. Where counseling and other evaluation is required, this is completed before follow-up visits with the superintendent take place and those health care professionals are able to share their assessments and recommendations. Student safety is the focus of this policy and it is followed.

There is also much in this policy about the due process rights and privacy rights of the student. There are times when it is found that the allegations are unfounded or fabricated. In a district of 3,000 students, we deal with everything from the elementary age student who shouts threats in anger, to students who are serious threats of doing harm to themselves and others. In every case, minor students will be given the right of privacy, though they will be removed from situations until appropriate assessments can be made. These situations happen rather frequently, with over ten reaching the office of the superintendent in the past year. In most cases, nobody outside of the students and parents directly involved in an incident will be notified by the school. We see no need to cause our students and their families excessive concern when perpetrators have been removed and our procedures to assure a safe environment are solidly in place.

No student will be returned to school who is deemed to be a danger to others. Any student with repeat offenses goes through the process again and it is generally the case that such students are unable to return at any time, but certainly not without a detailed behavior plan, created by school, mental health, and law enforcement professionals.

We have followed these procedures for many years and they have served us well. Threats have been dealt with and more often, students who have behaved foolishly...and their parents have walked away more educated about those actions that will not be allowed in our schools. As with our most recent incidents, it is critical that students are taught to report those things which they see or hear that can be interpreted as threats. Thank you for helping us reinforce the importance of this practice!

We appreciate your support as we continue to do everything possible to assure the safety of our students and staff!

~Superintendent Styler