Police Contact With Students

A police officer, in the course of duty, has the right to speak to a student, question a student, or take a student into custody while that student is at school or at school related activities. The principal or designee (hereinafter, "the principal") should cooperate in accordance with the following guidelines:

I. The principal should meet with the officer upon arrival and determine the reason for the officer’s presence, including:

   A. Name(s) of student(s) to be contacted
   B. Reason for student contact

       1. Investigating child abuse/neglect
       2. Questioning (suspect, victim, witness)
       3. Arrest (charges/petition filed with Juvenile Intake with or without taking into custody)
       4. Taking into custody

   It should be noted that the officer may not be able to provide detailed information because of the privacy rights of juveniles.

II. The principal should verify the identity of the police officer. If not in uniform or if a uniformed officer’s identify is questionable, identity should be verified by viewing the officer’s identification card. If any doubt remains, the principal should ask for the name of the officer’s supervisor and contact the supervisor for verification. The Prince William County Police Department should be contacted immediately if there is reason to believe that the identity is fraudulent or if the officer acts in an improper manner.

III. If possible, the principal should remove the student from the classroom/activity to an area where the officer may meet privately with the student. The principal or a designee should be present for all interviews of students, unless the police officer insists on questioning the student outside the presence of school
personnel. If the principal is not present when the student is questioned, the principal should remain nearby and be present at the conclusion of the meeting and as the officer exits the building.

IV. The principal shall immediately attempt to contact the student’s parent, if this has not previously been done, unless the police officer advises that this is a case of child abuse or neglect. The purpose of the call is to inform the parent/guardian of the police contact and the name(s) of the officer(s) involved, and to attempt to accommodate the parent’s/guardian’s wishes regarding their student’s interaction with the police. The notification should occur as soon as possible but should not interfere with the efforts of the police. If the student is subsequently taken into custody, the parent/guardian should again be notified. Parents/guardians may contact the police if they have questions, concerns, or objections. All attempts to notify parents should be documented.

The Director of Students Services, building principal, and the appropriate associate superintendent are responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this regulation.

Legal References: