

Switzerland County School Corporation

Policy to Address Criminal Gangs and Criminal Gang Activity in the Switzerland County School Corporation

A. Statement prohibiting gang activity in schools and reprisal or retaliation against individuals who report suspected gang activity; a definition of gang and gang activity.

It is the policy of the Switzerland County School Corporation to prohibit gang activity and similar destructive or illegal group behavior on school property or school buses or at school-sponsored functions.

B Statement prohibiting reprisal or retaliation against an individual who reports suspected criminal gang activity.

It is the policy of the Switzerland County School Corporation to prohibit reprisal or retaliation against individuals who report gang activity and similar destructive or illegal group behavior or who are victims, witnesses, bystanders, or others with reliable information about an act of gang activity and similar destructive or illegal group behavior.

C. Definition of “criminal gang” and “criminal gang activity”

“Criminal gang defined (per IC 35-45-9-1) - “criminal gang” means a group with at least three (3) members that specifically:

1. Either:

- a. Promotes, sponsors, or assists in; or
- b. Participates in; or

2. Requires as a condition of membership or continued membership; the commission of a felony or an act that would be a felony if committed by an adult or the offense of battery. (IC 35-42-2-1).

“Gang Activity” - a student who knowingly or intentionally participates in a criminal gang

or

a student who knowingly or intentionally solicits, recruits, entices, or intimidates another individual to join a criminal gang.

D. Procedures for reporting suspected gang activity and the prompt investigation of suspected criminal gang activity.

These procedures for reporting suspected gang activity are presented as a guide that by no means limits the school system from implementing additional procedures for reporting acts of suspected gang activity or similar destructive or illegal group behavior.

Per IC 20-33-9-10.5, a school employee shall report any incidence of suspected criminal gang activity, criminal gang intimidation, or criminal gang recruitment to the principal and the school safety specialist. The principal and the school safety specialist may take appropriate action to maintain a safe and secure school environment, including providing appropriate intervention services.

Appropriate consequences and remedial actions are those that are graded according to the severity of the offenses and consider both the developmental ages of the student offenders and students' histories of inappropriate behaviors, per the code of student conduct.

Any corporation or school employee who promptly reports an incident of suspected gang activity and makes this report in compliance with the procedures of this policy, is immune from a cause of action for damages arising from any failure to remedy the reported incident.

The principal or designee shall conduct a thorough and complete investigation for each report of suspected criminal gang activity. The investigation shall be initiated by the principal or the principal's designee within one school day of the report of the incident.

The

principal may appoint additional personnel and request the assistance of law enforcement

to assist in the investigation for the administrator's safety. The investigation shall be completed and the written findings submitted to the principal as soon as possible, but not later than five (5) school days from the date of the report of the alleged incident of criminal gang activity.

The principal shall submit the report to the superintendent of the school corporation within

ten (10) school days of the completion of the investigation. The superintendent or his/her

designee shall report the results of each investigation to the board of education on a quarterly basis during regularly scheduled board meetings.

Each school within the school corporation shall record the number of investigations disposed of internally and the number of cases referred to law enforcement, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age and gender. Each school shall report this information to the school corporation superintendent who shall submit a written report to the Indiana Department of Education by June 2 of each year.

The principal shall provide the parents of the students who are party to any investigation with information about the investigation, in accordance with Federal and State law and regulation. The information to be provided to parents includes the nature of the investigation, whether the corporation found evidence of criminal gang activity, and whether consequences were imposed or services provided to address the activity. This information is to be provided in an expedited manner.

The superintendent of the school corporation is authorized to define the range of ways in which the school staff and the principal or the principal's designee shall respond once an incident of criminal activity is confirmed, according to the parameters described in the corporation's code of student conduct. The school board recognizes that some actions of gang activity may be isolated incidents requiring that the school officials respond appropriately to the individuals committing the acts. Other acts may be so serious that they require a response either at the school corporation level or by law enforcement officials. Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a student who engages in gang activity may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

The principal shall proceed in accordance with the student code of conduct, as appropriate, based on the investigation findings. As appropriate to the investigation findings, the principal shall ensure the code of student conduct has been implemented, and provide intervention and/or relevant support services (i.e., refer to counseling, establish training programs to reduce gang activity and enhance school climate, enlist parent cooperation and involvement or take other appropriate action). The principal shall inform the parents of all students involved in alleged incidents, and, as appropriate, may discuss the availability of counseling and other intervention services.

The superintendent of the school corporation shall annually disseminate this policy to all parents who have children enrolled in a school within the school corporation. The superintendent shall ensure that notice of the corporation's policy appears in the student handbooks and all other publications of the school corporation that set forth the

comprehensive rules, procedures and standards for schools within the school corporation.

E. Information about types of services, including family support services, for a student suspected of participating in gang activity.

School systems should provide information about the supports and services available for students who are 'at risk' for and/or suspected of participating in gang activity and their families. Information about other available supports and services, should be consistent with the gang policies and procedures of the board of education.

1. Gang awareness education (for students, parents, school faculty/personnel, law enforcement, and community stakeholders) that at the least shows promise of effectiveness based upon research. The gang awareness education information should be revised and updated regularly to reflect current trends in gang and gang-like activity.
2. Culturally and/or linguistically appropriate services/supports for parents and families.
3. Counseling coupled with mentoring for students and their families.
4. Community and faith-based organizations and civic groups.
5. Viable, sustainable after-school programs developed in collaboration with other stakeholders.
6. Job training and employment opportunities as both a deterrent to gang involvement to gang involvement and an incentive to leave gang involvement.
7. School sanctioned/facilitated extra-curricular activities.

F. Recommendations concerning the mandated gang prevention and intervention services program for students that maximize community participation.

These recommendations are presented as a guide that by no means limits the school system from collaboration with community stakeholders to provide additional services.

The

Switzerland County School Corporation is encouraged to collaborate with stakeholders to

provide gang prevention and intervention services and programs according to the policies

and procedures of the school board of education. These strategies are based on evidence

proven models for gang awareness as outlined by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

1. Provide training for staff and teachers on gang prevention and intervention resources within a jurisdiction on a periodic basis. The gang awareness

information should be revised and updated regularly to reflect current trends in gang activity.

2. Create formalized collaboration plans between local school administration and community based prevention and intervention providers (possibly using the existing County Safe Schools Commission as points of contacts). The formalized collaborations should be effective, coordinated, and maximized use of federal funding a priority.
3. Coordinate resources and funding opportunities to support gang prevention and intervention activities.
4. Integrate School Resource Officer Programs when available.
5. Consider integrating the Gang Resistance Education and training (G.R.E.A.T.) Program into curricula.