



## MEMORANDUM

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### NOTICE – AUGUST 2006

#### **SCHOOL DISTRICT WEAPONS POLICY AND TRUANCY LAWS**

Bellevue School District has a no-tolerance policy when it comes to weapons on campus. We are asking parents and guardians to explain the rules to their students so that our schools will continue to be safe places for both children and adults.

**IF A STUDENT BRINGS A FIREARM TO SCHOOL, HE OR SHE WILL BE EXPELLED.** Principals will report all incidents to the police.

Bringing other dangerous weapons\* on campus is grounds for expulsion, suspension, or other disciplinary action. **THE USE OF ANY OBJECT IN A THREATENING MANNER MAY ALSO BE A REASON TO DISCIPLINE A STUDENT.** While the number of incidents in any given year is small, we take each one very seriously.

If your child becomes a victim of harassment, bullying or threatening behavior of any kind, please contact your school principal. In each school, trained counselors can assist students who want to talk about fears or unpleasant experiences.

Fortunately, because parents and school personnel are concerned about safety, our schools are good places for children to be. This fall Bellevue Police Department officers will continue to be available to support our high schools and our middle schools. We believe that police officers, consistent discipline policies, students' willingness to report problems, student mediator programs, and other regular school practices will work to keep schools safe. But we also need your help. Please talk to your student about constructive ways to solve problems, keep any weapons you own inaccessible, and alert us to any reports you hear about students bringing weapons to school or any other potentially dangerous situations. If we work together, we can keep our children safe.

\*These include air guns such as BB and pellet guns, knives, metal knuckles, sling shots, nunchu-ka sticks, throwing stars and replicas of dangerous weapons.

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### TRUANCY LAW

Washington State law requires school age children below 18 years of age to attend school. When a student has unexcused absences, the school will work with the student and parents/guardians to make sure the student comes to school.

The school may take a variety of actions to improve a student's attendance: hold a student and parent/guardian conference, take disciplinary action, change the student's schedule, recommend placement in a special program, or initiate other actions as appropriate.

If a student has either seven unexcused absences in any month, or ten unexcused absences during the school year, the school must file a petition with the King County Superior Court regarding the truanancies to enforce attendance. A truancy petition is a request to have the court order the student to attend school. If the student disobeys a court order to attend school, this could lead to civil penalties against the student and/or parents. These penalties could be a detention for the student in a juvenile facility and fines for parents.

Each school will work hard with your student to make sure that the education available is right for him/her. Each school publishes attendance policies and procedures. Parents and students should read and discuss them together. If you do not understand them, talk to the school's assistant principal or principal. We know you want your student to be successful. Attending school daily is one way to help contribute to that success.

Thank you for reviewing this material and communicating it to your student. We appreciate your involvement in these issues.