

The Westford Public Schools shall cooperate with law enforcement agencies in the interest of the larger welfare of all citizens. At the same time, schools have the responsibility to parents/legal guardians for the welfare of students while they are in the care of the school.

CUSTODY

A duly authorized police officer who requires that a student be released to his/her custody shall be asked to provide a written and signed notice from the police department to the school official in charge. Each school shall keep on file forms which may be used by police when taking custody for explaining the basis for the action. The forms shall provide the custodial officer the ability to select one of the following four reasons for taking custody:

1. Probable cause to affect an arrest exists.
2. The individual involved is a known fugitive from either his/her parents/legal guardians or justice.
3. Officer(s) have knowledge of a minor under the age of 18, incapacitated due to alcohol, who should be placed in Protective Custody in accordance with MGL Chapter 111B, Section 3, 8, and 10.
4. Officer(s) have knowledge of a minor under the age of 18, exposed to a Class A, B, or C drug, who should be placed in Protective Custody in accordance with MGL Chapter 94C, Section 36.

The administration is required to notify the Superintendent and the School Committee if an officer has required the administration to turn over a student for any reason other than one of those listed. Both the police and school officials have a responsibility to immediately notify the student's parent/legal guardian regarding the action taken and the rationale for the action.

QUESTIONING

If the police need to interview a student as a potential witness to a crime or as a potential victim of a crime, school officials shall notify the student's parent/legal guardian regarding the interview. The presence of the student's parent/legal guardian at the time of the interview is desirable to safeguard the self-incrimination rights of the student. Whenever possible, the interview should be conducted in private or at the Westford Police Department to avoid any display of law enforcement activities which could lead to unfortunate misunderstandings on the part of other students and members of the faculty. If the police need to interview a student who is a potential suspect to a crime and the student is under age 18, parents/legal guardians shall be notified prior to any interview. If the student is age 18 or above, school officials shall offer the student the opportunity to have his/her parents notified immediately.

IMMINENT THREATS

In the event that police interaction with students is of an urgent nature in order to investigate or deter an imminent threat to the safety of students or staff, notification of parents prior to an interview is not required.

POLICE AUTHORITIES P1401

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

Through the budgeting process, the School Committee may choose to employ a School Resource Officer (SRO) for the Westford Public Schools. The School Committee values the ability of a School Resource Officer to both provide an added measure of safety to students and staff, and to act as an educational resource. SROs report to the Chief of Police but operate in the school environment and are trained to operate in that environment. In the event an SRO is employed, the SRO shall have the following responsibilities:

- work closely with administrators on matters related to the safety of students and staff
- provide protection for students and staff in the event of an armed intruder
- visit classrooms to discuss topics such as law and decision making
- act as a district liaison with the Westford Police Department
- provide a law enforcement perspective when sought by students or staff
- provide a police presence at after school activities in order to deter the possibility of substance abuse
- interact with students and staff in a variety of settings throughout the school day to foster an environment of trust and openness with law enforcement
- invited to be a member of any Crisis Response Team and/or District Safety Team associated with the schools
- maintain data to support his/her efforts at Westford Academy
- maintain a daily/weekly log of interactions with students and staff

While nothing in this policy should be construed as requiring administrators to involve the SRO in any student issue if the issue may be resolved in a safe and satisfactory manner without such involvement, Westford Public Schools shall maintain a collaborative relationship with the Westford Police Department.

REFERENCES

Westford Public Schools Policy References:

P3602 — Building Inspection

P5310 — Searches of Student Lockers

Other References:

Memorandum of Understanding between Westford Public Schools and Westford Police Department
Agreement between Westford Public School System and the Westford Police Department for the School Resource Officer Program

Criminal Law Police Manual 8th edition, John S. Scheft, Esq.

MGL Chapter 111B, Section 3, 8, and 10

MGL Chapter 94C, Section 36

Policy Adopted: April 9, 2001

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WESTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Westford, Massachusetts 01886