

WOODSBORO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

408 South Kasten Street - P.O. Box 770
Woodsboro, Texas 78393
361-543-4518 / 361-543-4856 fax

March 27, 2018

An Open Letter to Woodsboro ISD Parents/Guardians

PURPOSE: To communicate what we are doing for safety and to solicit your help.

School personnel have received notice from parents about the secondary campus having a student who may be creating a hostile environment. Recently Sheriff Pinky Gonzales spoke to the media about a student who may be making threatening remarks.

WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT THREATS?

The administrative team and I want you to know we work continuously to promote having a safe environment. Principals are conducting various types of drills--fire, shelter in place, and tornado. Teachers have been instructed to keep doors locked and talk to students about safety. They have been asked to report something unsafe or unusual to the teacher or principal.

The district is researching access control, an app for phones to aid in emergency procedures, and 2-way radios. James Blaschke, district safety coordinator, has recently written the district's Emergency Operations Plan which will be posted online after the school board approves it.

In the WISD **Student Code of Conduct**, we have established protocols for handling disruptive situations. On page 8, "Students shall not: Make false accusations or perpetuate hoaxes regarding school safety." If a student makes a threat--either written or oral--it is taken seriously. First, the principal talks with the student and listens to their side. Second, the principal investigates by talking to the teacher who may have provided a written referral. Witnesses are interviewed. Third, the principal contacts the parent to explain what happened and to get their support. Then a decision is reached about possible punishment.

The reason you do not hear about specific students identified by name and an offense is because all students are protected by a federal law called FERPA.

FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974) is federal legislation in the United States that protects the privacy of students' personally identifiable information (PII). The act applies to all educational institutions that receive federal funds.

Protecting the privacy of students and safeguarding the confidentiality of their records is a responsibility that must be addressed by every public school. FERPA, or the **Family Education Rights and Privacy Act**, was enacted into Federal law in 1974 and serves to help keep these records safe from public view.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP US?

We share your concern for maintaining safety while at school and while attending school functions. We ask for your respect and support as we work through these turbulent times.

1. If you hear a threat or discover a dangerous situation (emails, telephone calls, gestures, expressions, or social media postings), please let us know. We want a safe workplace and school.
2. Please talk to your child about feeling safe at school without making them fear attending. If you remove them from school and the superintendent has not designated the day as an emergency because of bad weather or an alleged threat, then they are counted absent.
3. Communicating in threatening words in oral or written statements at school are taken seriously. It's like the signs at secure entrances to the airport: If you say something about harming someone, using a firearm, or exploding a bomb, you will be pulled aside and asked questions. More serious consequences may follow. If a student says they are just teasing or kidding around at school, we do not think it is funny. It is serious to make harmful statements. The student will be questioned and possibly punished.
4. Use kind words and get along with others. If you see or hear something dangerous, please say something to a school administrator.
5. Elementary classrooms have rules posted about respecting others and keeping their hands and feet to themselves. These rules are appropriate for all ages.

Please help us maintain a positive and safe learning environment for children. Woodsboro ISD has motivated, professional teachers and great students.

Sincerely,

Janice Sykora, Superintendent

361-543-4518 ext 301

Dr. Linda Garza, Jr/Sr High Principal

361-543-4521 ext 317 or 318

Leslie Garza, Elementary Principal

361-543-4521 ext 313

