

5615 SUSPECTED GANG ACTIVITY

The Lakewood Board of Education recognizes the need for appropriate rules and regulations to ensure a safe and healthy environment that is conducive to teaching and learning.

In that connection, the district acknowledges the existence of criminal gangs in our society, and the importance and necessity of deterring all persons from emulating gangs or contributing to the proliferation of gangs. A gang in this Policy is defined as any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having as one of its primary activities the commission of criminal acts and having a common name or common identifying with gang or gang-related activity signs, colors, and/or symbols.

- A. The Board of Education prohibits the following on school property or at school related functions, and off school property if it involves intimidation or an attack on another student in the district:
1. Initiating, advocating, or promoting a gang or any gang-related activities;
 2. Tagging or defacing school property with gang names, slogans and/or insignias;
 3. Conducting gang initiations;
 4. Threatening another with bodily injury and/or inflicting bodily injury on another in connection;
 5. Inciting, soliciting, or recruiting others for gang membership or gang-related activities; and
 6. Aiding or abetting any of the above activities by one's presence or support.

Any student found to have engaged in any of the above shall be subject to school discipline, including but not limited to detention, suspension, and/or expulsion. For any disciplinary matter covered by the above or by any other part of the school's disciplinary code, a finding that the conduct was gang-related or gang-affiliated shall be considered an aggravating factor in determining the appropriate punishment.

- B. The Board further prohibits the following in school and at school-related events:



1. Wearing of gang apparel, accessories, signs, insignias, or symbols on one's clothing or person.
2. Display of gang apparel, accessories, signs, insignias, or symbols on personal property.
3. Communication in any method (verbally or non-verbally) designed to convey gang membership or affiliation.

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall determine, in consultation with law enforcement officials, what types of specific apparel, accessories, signs, insignias, and symbols are to be prohibited at each school under this Policy, and shall promulgate and publicize such list to all students and parents. The list may be updated or modified at any time by the Superintendent or his/her designee, and any additions or changes communicated to students via the district's web site, student handbooks or any other reasonable means. The list may be part of a broader dress code applicable to all students at the school.

A student may be disciplined for wearing or display of any apparel, accessory, sign, insignia, or symbol which is specifically prohibited on the list promulgated by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

The preferred response to the wearing or display of items prohibited by policy or regulation (unaccompanied by any other disciplinary code violation) is intervention in lieu of discipline. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall conduct an intervention when a student is suspected of gang activity. The decision to intervene in lieu of imposing discipline is left to the discretion of the school administrator, based upon all the circumstances, including the nature of the violation, the adequacy of the notice that the item was prohibited and the students overall behaviors in the school setting. Intervention may include counseling, meetings with parents and/or police and recommendations for attending informational programs on gangs. The purpose of such intervention is to discuss the school's observations and concerns and to offer the student and the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) information and an opportunity to ask questions or provide other information and support.

N.J.S.A. 18A:11-9

N.J.S.A. 2C:44-3.h.

New Jersey State Police Street Gang Bureau – Know the Signs: A Guide to Gang Identification

Adopted: 17 October 2013

