

NEWS & INSIGHTS

Act 44 of 2025: New School Requirements for Parent and Employee Notifications of Weapon Incidents

BY: [DR. LEIGH E. DALTON](#) | [INSIGHTS](#) | [LEGAL UPDATE](#)

NOVEMBER 19, 2025



Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro signed Act 44 of 2025 this month, amending the Public School Code to require direct notification to parents/guardians and school employees when a student is found in possession of a weapon on school property, at a school-sponsored activity, or on school transportation.

This law applies to public school entities (including career and technical schools, charter schools, and intermediate

units) as well as private and nonpublic schools across the Commonwealth.

Notification requirements

Schools must notify parents/guardians and school employees within 24 hours of a weapons incident using a method of communication likely to reach those individuals.

- If the incident occurs in a single school building, notification may be limited to the parents/guardians of students attending that individual school, as well as the employees assigned to that building.
- If a school building shares a campus with other school buildings, notification must extend to all parents/guardians and employees assigned to any building on that campus. When a weapons incident occurs during a school-sponsored activity or on school transportation, the school must ensure the notification reaches the “appropriate population” of parents, guardians, and employees connected to that event or activity.

If a student is found in possession of a weapon, the employee(s) to whom that student is assigned must be notified of the student’s identity and records related to the incident, as that employee is deemed to have a legitimate educational interest under the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

General notifications must **not** contain personally identifiable information about students. Specific notification with more detailed information must be given to the parent/guardian of the student found in possession of the weapon and to the employee(s) assigned to that student. Schools must continue to report weapon-related incidents to law enforcement and PDE as required.

Notifications are required for incidents that violate:

- (1) 24 P.S. § 1317.2 (Possession of weapons prohibited)
- (2) 18 Pa.C.S. § 912 (Possession of weapon on school property)
- (3) Locally established policies of the school entity relating to weapons

Weapons defined by the above-referenced statutory sections include, but are not limited to: *“any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle and any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.”*

Next steps

Overall, Act 44 substantially expands school entities’ notification obligations beyond law enforcement reporting. Districts are encouraged to review and update board policies and administrative procedures related to weapons and incident reporting. Districts whose policy definitions of ‘weapons’ are broader or narrower than the statutory

definitions should carefully evaluate those provisions, as differing definitions may create inconsistent notification obligations or unintentionally expand the scope of Act 44.

The Saxton & Stump [Education Law Group](#) is currently reviewing options for compliant statutory notice and identifying necessary revisions to district policies – particularly where local definitions include “look-alike” weapons or other implements that might not meet state law definitions – to ensure alignment with Act 44’s requirements. Please reach out to [Leigh Dalton](#) through [Mindy Holtzer](#) if you are interested in an Act 44 package to assist with notification requirements including policy impacts. This act goes into effect on Jan. 5.

Related People

[Dr. Leigh E. Dalton](#)

Related Services and Industries

[Education](#)