

VIGO COUNTY SCHOOL CORPORATION
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

File: **JFB**

**Vigo County School Corporation Policy to Address Criminal Gangs and Criminal
Gang Activity in Schools**

It is the policy of the Vigo County School Corporation to prohibit gang activity and similar destructive or illegal group behavior on school property or school buses or at school-sponsored functions.

It is the policy of the Vigo County School Corporation to prohibit reprisal or retaliation against individuals who report gang activity and similar destructive or illegal group behavior or who are victims, witnesses, bystanders, or others with reliable information about an act of gang activity and similar destructive or illegal group behavior.

"Criminal gang" defined (per IC 35-45-9-1)- "criminal gang" means a group with at least three (3) members that specifically:

(1) either:

(A) promotes, sponsors, or assists in; or

(B) participates in; or

(2) requires as a condition of membership or continued membership;

the commission of a felony or an act that would be a felony if committed by an adult or

the offense of battery (IC 35-42-2-1).

"Gang Activity"- a student who knowingly or intentionally actively participates in a criminal gang, or a student who knowingly or intentionally solicits, recruits, entices, or intimidates another individual to join a criminal gang.

Procedures for reporting

Procedures for reporting suspected gang activity are presented as a guide that by no means limits school systems from implementing additional procedures for reporting acts of suspected gang activity or similar destructive or illegal group behavior. Per IC 20-33-9-10.5, a school employee shall report any incidence of suspected criminal gang activity, criminal gang intimidation, or criminal gang recruitment to the principal and the school safety specialist. The principal in consultation with the school safety specialist may take appropriate action to maintain a safe and secure school environment, including providing appropriate intervention services. Appropriate consequences and remedial actions are those that are graded according to the severity of the offenses and consider both the developmental ages of the student offenders and students' histories of inappropriate behaviors, per the code of student conduct. Any corporation and school employee who promptly reports an incident of suspected gang

activity and who makes this report in compliance with the procedures of this policy, is immune from a cause of action for damages arising from any failure to remedy the reported incident. The principal or designee shall conduct a thorough and complete investigation for each report of suspected gang activity. The investigation of the incident shall be initiated by the principal or the principal's designee within one school day of the report, when possible. The principal may appoint additional personnel and request the assistance of law enforcement to assist in the investigation for the administrator's safety. The investigation shall be completed and the written findings submitted to the principal as soon as possible, but not later than five school days from the date of the report of the alleged incident of criminal gang activity. The principal, may when circumstances warrant, request an additional period of time up to ten additional days to complete the report. The Superintendent or designee may grant such request as needed. The principal shall submit the report to the superintendent or designee of the school corporation within ten (10) school days of the completion of the investigation. Each school within the school corporation shall record the number of investigations disposed of internally and the number of cases referred to local law enforcement, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age, and gender. Each school shall report this information to the school corporation superintendent who shall submit a written report to the Indiana Department of Education by June 2 of each year. The principal shall provide the parents of the students who are parties to any investigation with information about the investigation, in accordance with Federal and State law and regulation. The information to be provided to parents includes the nature of the investigation, whether the corporation found evidence of criminal gang activity, and whether consequences were imposed or services provided to address the activity. This information is to be provided in an expedited manner. The superintendent of the school corporation is authorized to define the range of ways in which school staff and the principal or the principal's designee shall respond once an incident of criminal gang activity is confirmed, according to the parameters described in the corporation's code of student conduct. The school board recognizes that some acts of gang activity may be isolated incidents requiring that the school officials respond appropriately to the individuals committing the acts. Other acts may be so serious that they require a response either at the school corporation level or by local law enforcement officials. Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a student who engages in gang activity may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion. The principal shall proceed in accordance with the code of student conduct, as appropriate, based on the investigation findings. As appropriate to the investigation findings, the principal shall ensure the code of student conduct has been implemented, and provide intervention and/or relevant support services (i.e., refer to counseling, establish training programs to reduce gang activity and enhance school climate, enlist parent corporation and involvement or take other appropriate action). The principal shall inform the parents of all students involved in alleged incidents, and, as appropriate, may discuss the availability of counseling and other intervention services. The superintendent of the school corporation shall annually disseminate this policy to all parents who have children enrolled in a school within the school corporation. The superintendent shall ensure that notice of the corporation's policy appears in the student handbooks and all other publications of the school corporation that set forth the comprehensive rules, procedures and standards for schools within the school corporation.

Information about the types of services, including family support services, for a student suspected of participating in gang activity.

The Vigo County School Corporation may provide information about the supports and services available for students who are 'at risk' for and/or suspected of participating in gang activity and their families. Information about other available supports and services should be consistent with the policies and procedures of the local board of education.

Gang awareness education (any or all of the below activities may be used by any school)

- Gang awareness education for students, parents, school faculty/personnel, law enforcement, and community stakeholders will be made available to the identified groups noted on request and may be presented to any of the above on an annual basis.
- Education should be Culturally and/or linguistically appropriate services/supports for parents and families.
- Counseling coupled with mentoring for identified students and their families.
- Community and faith-based organizations and civic groups.
- Viable, sustainable after-school programs developed in collaboration with other stakeholders.
- Job training and employment opportunities as both a deterrent to gang involvement and an incentive to leave gang involvement.
- School sanctioned/facilitated extra-curricular activities.
- Involvement of School Resource Officers in prevention efforts at the building level where available.

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