

Revised on 11-18-02 rfc

GUIDELINES:

DATE: June 25, 2002

TO: Principals

FROM: David J. Blowman, Department of Education
Randal Wimberley, Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, Community Notification Task Force Co-Chairs

SUBJECT: Community Notification – Sex Offenders- **Guidelines**

As a result of the passage of H.B. 458 school districts no longer are required to mail out sex offender notifications to the homes of all students. Following a review of the law by the Community Notification Task Force the General Assembly determined that task of community notification should remain primarily under law enforcement. However, to help keep children safe the following are required of schools:

- Schools shall have information on sex offenders easily accessible through a binder kept in the main office available to view upon request by adults and juveniles with adult supervision. **No notification shall be removed from the binder unless the school is notified of an address change informing them that the offender has moved from the community.**
- Schools shall allow community members to have access to the State's Community Notification web-site in the school building.
- It is the schools' responsibility to ensure that all staff is aware of registered sex offenders in the community.
- Schools should regularly inform parents through existing communication methods such as newsletters of the availability of notifications and if there are changes to the information enclosed in the binders.
- Schools are prohibited from the physical posting of sex offender notifications.
- Schools should have a significant role in educating students about personal safety and awareness, consistent with the Delaware Health Education Curriculum Framework.

Community Notification Overview

Community notification is the primary responsibility of law enforcement. The posting of this information is required by law and is available on the Delaware State Police Sex Offender Registry web site (www.state.de.us/dsp/sexoff). Adult or juveniles who are convicted or adjudicated of specific sex offenses are required by law to be registered. State and local police agencies send to public schools written notification of registered sex offenders who reside in the community. Every school (including charter schools) and school district must place the notifications in a binder in the school building and district

office. The binder will be located in the main office and will be available for review upon request by adults and juveniles with adult supervision. **It is important to note that not all sex offenders are child predators or pose a threat to children.** These guidelines are designed to ensure the appropriate use of Sex Offender Registry notifications received by schools/districts, to assist school/district staff in directing inquiries prompted by the notification, as well as generally help parents/guardians in educating or reminding their child(ren) about personal safety. The guidelines will be available on the Internet (www.doe.state.de.us or www.state.de.us/kids).

1. School districts and charter schools shall inform staff of the appropriate individuals to whom parents should be referred, such as the guidance counselor and/or the principal. Referrals should be made as follows:
 - preparing children for personal safety designated district/school resource or Prevent Child Abuse Delaware
302-254-4611 or 674-1112
 - reporting child abuse 1-800-292-9582
 - inquiries about the Sex Offender Registry Delaware State Police
302-739-5882 or www.state.de.us/dsp/sexoff

 - information about notification Law enforcement agency whose jurisdiction includes the offender’s registered address.
2. Districts shall keep in a binder any community notification received from police regarding sex offenders attending the school or living in the school community.
3. Districts shall keep the Note to Parents (Attachment A) with any notification viewed by parents to assure that parents understand that:
 - the notice is intended for informational purposes to assist in preparing children for personal safety;
 - a sex offender is not necessarily a child predator;
 - resources are available to help them educate children about personal safety;
 - no one (parents, guardians, students or staff) is to post the notification;
 - no one should take action against the person or property of the offender, offender’s family or household or employer; and
 - child abuse should be reported.
4. Districts and charter schools shall distribute the Note to Staff (attachment B) so that staff understand that:
 - the notification is intended for staff to exercise appropriate caution to protect those under their care and supervision;
 - the notification is not to be presented to or discussed with any student(s) or other staff;
 - inquiries or reports should be referred to the appropriate resources;
 - no one (parents/guardians, students or staff) is to post the notification; and

- no one should take action against the person or property of the offender, offender's family or household or employer.
5. School districts and charter schools will maintain a log to document receipt of a Sex Offender Notifications and appropriate distribution.

NOTE TO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

The police are responsible for notifying the community of sex offenders in the area. This information is available on the Delaware State Police web site (www.state.de.us/dsp/sexoff). By law, all adults or juveniles who are convicted or adjudicated of specific sex offenses are registered. **Please note that not all sex offenders are child predators or pose a threat to children.**

School districts and charter schools must keep notifications of registered sex offenders received from the police in a binder in each school. They must follow guidelines for distribution of the notifications they receive. The guidelines will be available on the Internet (www.doe.state.de.us or www.state.de.us/kids).

The included notification may assist you in protecting your family. It is best that only parents and guardians share this information in an age appropriate manner with their child or children so that the child will understand appropriate actions for their safety.

Parents and guardians should use this information in an age appropriate way that helps children with personal safety but does not overwhelm the child. Prevent Child Abuse Delaware, a local nonprofit agency, has developed a list of safety tips to assist parent/guardian in helping their child feel safe:

- Review safety rules for your home – tell your child not to answer the door when you are not home and establish a plan for answering the telephone.
- Make a list with your child of three safe grown-ups he/she can talk to if afraid or in trouble and you are not there.
- Talk with your child about what places are safe to visit in your community and which are not.
- Review with your child the four private places which are the mouth, the breasts, the genitalia, and the buttocks. Explain that no one should touch these places unless they are helping to keep the child healthy (exam by a doctor) or clean (bathing).
- Encourage your child to tell you if someone talks to or touches him/her in a way that makes them feel bad or that he/she doesn't like.
- Encourage open discussion with your child about his/her willingness to talk to grown-ups in your family about the things that bother him/her.
- Determine if your child knows that the grown-ups in your family will listen to him/her. Ask yourself honestly if this is true. Do you and other adults in your family really listen to the children in your care?
- Tell your child that it is not the child's fault if someone tries to bother him/her or touch him/her in a way they don't like.
- Let your child know how special you think they are, encourage him/her to think of themselves as a person worthy of respect, who also respects others. Treat and talk with your child in a way that conveys your respect.

If you would like further information on how to keep your child safe, you can speak with the school guidance counselor or contact Prevent Child Abuse Delaware at 254-4611.

For more information about the Sex Offenders Registry, contact Delaware State Police (302-739-5882).

If you have questions about an enclosed notification or specific offenders, please contact your local police.

Report child abuse by calling 1-800-292-9582. Do report emergencies by calling 911.

Do not post this notification publicly or where non-family members may see it. Remember, it is best for children to get this information from their parents and guardians.

Do not take any action that may in any way harm or harass the offender, the offender's family, household members or employer. Do not attempt to harass the offender or make unsolicited, unwanted contact. If you believe anyone is a physical threat to you or children in your care, please contact the local police.

Please use the information responsibly for the safety and well-being of those in your care.

Anyone who uses this information to commit a crime against another person is subject to criminal prosecution.

NOTE TO SCHOOL/DISTRICT STAFF

Community notification of sex offenders is the responsibility of the law enforcement agencies. The posting of this information is required by law and is available on the Delaware State Police Sex Offender Registry web site (www.state.de.us/dsp/sexoff). All individuals, adult or juvenile, who are convicted or adjudicated of a number of sex offenses, are required by law to be registered. **Please note that not all sex offenders are child predators or pose a threat to children.**

School districts and charter schools are required to provide to parents, guardians and staff any notification of registered sex offenders received by the superintendent/principal of the district/school from the police. School districts and charter schools must follow guidelines designed to ensure the appropriate distribution such notifications. The guidelines are available via Internet www.doe.state.de.us and www.state.de.us/kids).

Do use the information in a responsible manner that will facilitate the safety and well-being of those in your care. Remain alert and exercise appropriate caution to protect those in your care or supervision. Advise the school principal or law enforcement agency if you believe anyone poses a threat to other persons.

Report child abuse by calling 1-800-292-9582.

Report emergencies by calling 911.

Refer students, parents and guardians with questions about information on personal safety to either your district, school or charter school office. Parents may also call Prevent Child Abuse-Delaware (302-254-4611 or 674-1112).

If you or another adult would like more information about the Sex Offenders Registry contact the Delaware State Police (302-739-5882).

For any inquiries about an enclosed notification or specific offenders, please refer to the law enforcement agency with primary jurisdiction of the offender's registered address.

Do not conduct classroom or individual discussions with students or parents and guardians. Do not post or display this notification in a public location. Remember that it is in the best interests of the children that information of this kind be shared by parents or guardians in an age-appropriate manner that results in their personal safety.

Do not take any action that may in any way harm or harass the offender, the offender's family, household members or employer. Do not attempt to harass the offender or make unsolicited, unwanted contact. If you believe anyone is a physical threat to you or children in your care please contact your local police.

Anyone who uses this information to commit a crime against another person is subject to criminal prosecution.