

Related Entries: (Board Policy 2.11, 2.13, 2.14)

### Guardian Program

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6 (1) Purpose:  
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8 The purpose of this policy is to establish the Guardian Program and outlines the  
9 selection, procedures, and training of guardians employed by the School District  
10 (“District”).  
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12 (2) Definitions:  
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14 Guardian means any member of a designated employee group in the District who has  
15 successfully completed all of the training requirements and prerequisites defined in  
16 F.S. 1006.12, and who has been appointed to serve as a guardian by the  
17 Superintendent. A candidate for the Guardian Program shall be a volunteer and offered  
18 no monetary benefit aside from the one-time stipend outlined in the statute. The  
19 candidate must be a full-time employee of the District who is in good standing. Further,  
20 candidates shall not be employees exclusively performing classroom duties as teachers  
21 as defined in F.S. 1012.01(2)(a).  
22

23 School Safety Specialist means the certified School Safety Specialist appointed by the  
24 Board and Superintendent to oversee all security programs and personnel, as defined in  
25 F.S. 1006.07, to include oversight of appointed guardians.  
26

27 Active Assailant/Armed Intruder is an individual(s) actively engaged in killing or  
28 attempting to use deadly physical force on other people in a confined and/or populated  
29 area.  
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31 (3) Priorities and Objectives:  
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33 The purpose of this policy is to define the procedures for application and approval as a  
34 guardian. This will include the roles of guardians, define their supervision, and list  
35 additional training requirements that may be imposed by the District. The objective is to  
36 ensure that the use of guardians conforms to the standards of the District and that they  
37 serve to enhance the overall security of campuses throughout the District.  
38

39 (4) Responsibilities:  
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41 (a) School Safety Specialist:  
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- 43 1. The School Safety Specialist or designee, a representative from Safety and  
44 Security, Human Resources, the Lee County Sheriff's Office ("LCSO") and others,  
45 as appointed by the Superintendent, will be part of a District panel that will review  
46 all guardian applications for compliance with state law and District policy. The  
47 School Safety Specialist shall provide recommendations to the Superintendent for  
48 approval or denial of applicants based on their required background checks, drug  
49 screenings, evaluations, training as defined in F.S. 1006.12, and the panel's  
50 recommendation. The Lee County Sheriff's Office ("LCSO") must also approve  
51 all applicants.  
52
- 53 2. A designee from the LCSO shall be responsible for inspecting all guardian  
54 equipment. Equipment may include firearms, ammunition, magazines, holsters,  
55 magazine holder, vests, and identification. All equipment must be issued and  
56 approved by LCSO and the District. Guardians accepting the issued equipment  
57 shall abide by all procedures and sign an agreement attesting that they will follow  
58 all applicable procedures and responsibilities. This agreement will be witnessed  
59 by the School Safety Specialist. Safety and Security, along with LCSO will  
60 maintain all records of issued equipment.  
61
- 62 3. The School Safety Specialist and LCSO shall inspect all guardian-issued  
63 equipment monthly to ensure serviceability and accounting. Each inspection shall  
64 be documented.  
65
- 66 4. The School Safety Specialist and LCSO shall maintain or have access to the  
67 training records for each guardian. The record will contain their annual  
68 requalification dates and any additional training the District requires throughout  
69 the year. This may include additional firearms training, tactics, legal updates, or  
70 other areas specific to the duties of their position.  
71
- 72 5. The School Safety Specialist, in conjunction with Human Resources, shall notify  
73 the Superintendent of any guardian who is on medical leave, injured, suspended  
74 from their position for any reason, or unable to perform their duties as a guardian.  
75
- 76 6. The School Safety Specialist, as required in F.S. 1006.12, shall ensure the District  
77 notifies the LCSO and the Office of Safe Schools within 72 hours of any guardian  
78 being disciplined or dismissed for misconduct, or any incident where a guardian  
79 discharges their firearm for other than training purposes.  
80

81 (b) School Guardians:  
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- 83 1. To be appointed as a guardian, a designated employee must be in good standing  
84 with the District, and must meet the eligibility requirements for a guardian, as  
85 defined in F.S. 1006.12.  
86

- 87 2. The candidate must make an initial application to the Superintendent. This will be  
88 done in the form of a memorandum, which shall outline the qualifications and  
89 willingness to volunteer for the program.  
90
- 91 3. A panel of representatives from Safety and Security, Human Resources, LCSO  
92 and others, as appointed by the Superintendent are responsible for reviewing all  
93 guardian applications, and to ensure compliance with State Law and District  
94 policy. The panel shall provide recommendations to the Superintendent to move  
95 forward in the application process. The Superintendent may accept the  
96 recommendation of the panel or deny the recommendation. Denials shall not be  
97 arbitrary or capricious. Denials should be based on concerns such as, but not  
98 limited to, the inability to secure liability coverage for the individual, newly found  
99 information of the applicant's current position could create a negative impact on  
100 the School District being a Guardian.  
101
- 102 4. If the application is approved by the Superintendent to move forward in the  
103 process, the employee will be contacted by the School Safety Specialist to  
104 complete any required paperwork for the LCSO.  
105
- 106 5. Once the guardian is approved, the employee will be scheduled for a background  
107 check that includes a psychological evaluation and drug screening. The  
108 employee will also undergo the required statutory training and any other  
109 requirements set forth by the LCSO.  
110
- 111 6. All training requirements as outlined by the LCSO must be met. Failing to attend  
112 a required training session or any program components will result in immediate  
113 non-approval of the applicant or the termination of the guardian.  
114
- 115 7. The District will treat all required training hours as Temp Duty as outlined and in  
116 compliance with applicable standards as prescribed in District leave. policies  
117
- 118 8. Upon successful completion of the LCSO's training program, the applicants shall  
119 present to the Superintendent their certification as provided by the LCSO as proof  
120 of completing all requirements outlined in F.S. 1006.07 and other requirements as  
121 designated by the LCSO. Upon receipt, the Superintendent may appoint the  
122 applicant as a guardian. However, even if proof of completion is received, the final  
123 decision to appoint an individual as a guardian is left solely to the discretion of the  
124 Superintendent. The Superintendent's decision is final and not appealable.  
125 However, the appointment cannot be made in an arbitrary nor capricious manner.  
126 All acceptances or denials shall be accompanied by the appropriate  
127 documentation that supports the decision.  
128

- 129 9. Appointed guardians will participate in all mandated continuing training and  
130 related activities throughout the school year and will complete the mandatory  
131 recertification.  
132
- 133 10. Appointed guardians will remain knowledgeable of current processes and  
134 procedures pertinent to the Guardian Program through continued education,  
135 seminars, and training.  
136
- 137 11. Appointed guardians will assist law enforcement agencies and staff in the  
138 identification, deterrence, mitigation, and prosecution of subjects that affect the  
139 security and safety of students, staff, and visitors on the school property.  
140
- 141 12. Appointed guardians will cooperate with LCSO, the State Attorney's Office, Child  
142 Protective Services, and other state and federal agencies in the interest of public  
143 safety.  
144
- 145 13. Appointed guardians shall adhere to safety rules and procedures.  
146
- 147 14. Appointed guardians will be issued firearms and related equipment. Only the  
148 approved firearm by the LCSO is authorized for carry while carrying out the duties  
149 of a guardian. It shall be worn in an approved manner as directed. No weapons  
150 or equipment other than what is issued or approved items and signed for in the  
151 agreement shall be carried or utilized by a guardian at schools or on school  
152 property.  
153
- 154 15. All issued firearms shall be maintained in good working condition and cleaned as  
155 often as necessary to ensure proper operation. There shall be no alterations or  
156 modifications to the issued firearm. Appointed guardians are responsible for the  
157 general maintenance and care of issued firearms.  
158
- 159 16. Issued firearms and ammunition shall be properly possessed, retained, and stored  
160 at all times, per F.S. 790.174.  
161
- 162 17. Easily identifiable attire or uniform will be issued to guardians.  
163
- 164 18. Guardians shall not act as law enforcement officers and do not possess any of  
165 the authorities of a law enforcement officer. Guardians are not authorized by the  
166 District and LCSO to enforce any laws. The purpose of a guardian is to defend life  
167 from an active threat on any District property. Guardians are responsible for  
168 providing security and safety services at schools or school property and protecting  
169 the life and well-being of students, staff, and visitors.  
170
- 171 19. In accordance with the guardian's training, they shall respond singularly to defend  
172 life. Should other guardians or law enforcement be present, they can respond as

- 173 a group and are authorized to defend any school or school property from an active  
174 threat. Guardians are to use reasonable/appropriate level of force to stop, disrupt,  
175 or eliminate possible life-threatening physical threats to students, staff, and  
176 visitors on school property  
177
- 178 20. Appointed guardians will follow federal and state laws. Guardians are employees  
179 of the School District of Lee County and shall adhere to all School Board policies  
180 and procedures, such as school board policies; 1.27 “non-discrimination,” 1.22  
181 “Equity in school programs and employment practices,” 1.23 “Prohibition of  
182 Harassment,” 1.28 “Ethics in Education,” and 5.26 “Professional Standards”.  
183
- 184 21. Any guardian who fires their weapon for any reason other than on the firing range  
185 for training, must be reported to the School Safety Specialist or designee  
186 immediately. The guardian involved in such a situation shall cooperate with any  
187 subsequent law enforcement and/or District investigation. Failure to cooperate  
188 with any District investigation may result in disciplinary action, including  
189 termination from the Guardian Program and/or the District.  
190
- 191 22. Guardians will only be permitted to carry issued firearms and any assigned  
192 equipment while on duty at the assigned school during their assigned hours.  
193 Guardians will not carry issued firearms or equipment out of school or school  
194 property. Issued firearm, ammunition, and equipment shall be stored in the  
195 guardian’s domicile per statute. Issued firearm and related equipment shall be  
196 secured in a vehicle lock box while traveling to and from their residence.  
197
- 198 23. All appointed guardians will treat all information or intelligence of a possible or  
199 ongoing investigation received as confidential, including but not limited to  
200 information or intelligence received via all sources such as, telephone, mobile  
201 phone, texting, computer, social media, etc. The dissemination of such  
202 confidential information or intelligence to anyone not needing to know, such as  
203 LCSO, School Safety Specialist, or certain individuals in school administration  
204 (persons not directly involved in any internal, non-criminal, or criminal  
205 investigation) is strictly prohibited.  
206
- 207 24. Appointed guardians shall contact the Safety and Security Specialist, School  
208 Resource Officer (“SRO”), School Principal and/or Principal’s designee, for a  
209 situation or incident that is not under their authority or responsibility.  
210
- 211 25. Appointed guardians shall work with law enforcement officers by sharing relevant  
212 information and intelligence regarding threats and incidents related to the safety  
213 and security of the students, staff, visitors, and others on campus.  
214
- 215 26. Any violation of these directives will result in termination from the Guardian  
216 Program and, possibly, termination of employment with the District.

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(5) General Procedures:

- (a) Pursuant to F.S. 30.15, each Sheriff may establish a Coach Chris Hixon, Coach Aaron Feis, and Coach Scott Beigel Guardian Program, in which certain volunteer school employees will be appointed as school guardians.
- (b) Pursuant to F.S. 30.15, a guardian has no authority to act in any law enforcement capacity except to the extent necessary to prevent or abate an active assailant incident on school premises. Appointed guardians will report directly to the School Safety Specialist.
- (c) Pursuant to F.S. 1006.12, in the event of the discharge of a firearm by any Safe School Officer, including a guardian, the School Safety Specialist shall notify the LCSO immediately after the incident. Additionally, the School Safety Specialist will notify the Florida Department of Education Office of Safe Schools in writing via an Incident Report in the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool portal immediately but no later than 72 hours after the incident.
- (d) Pursuant to F.S. 1006.12, in the event a guardian is dismissed from the program, District or is otherwise disciplined, the School Safety Specialist will notify the Florida Department of Education Office of Safe Schools in writing via an Incident Report in the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool portal immediately but no later than 72 hours after the incident.
- (e) Pursuant to F.S. 1003.32, and F.S. 1006.09, the management of student discipline is the responsibility of the school principal or principal's designee. A guardian can be considered a principal's designee based on their current position with the District.
- (f) Pursuant to F.S. 776.012, a guardian is justified in using objectively reasonable force, except deadly force, if present during a physical altercation between individuals on his/her assigned school campus. Intervention is to be the minimum force required to de-escalate the incident and to keep the individuals and campus safe. Administration and SRO are to be notified immediately.
- (g) Firearms shall not be displayed or handled in any unsafe manner that may cause concern.
- (h) Issued firearm will remain holstered at all times except when needed in authorized duties or for training, inspection, cleaning, and repair purposes.
- (i) Issued firearms shall not be utilized for anything other than authorized appointed guardian duties and training purposes.
- (j) Appointed guardians will not draw and point their issued firearm at any individual unless they reasonably believe that the individual has engaged or is about to engage

263 in any active deadly threat. If the appointed guardian displays an issued firearm or  
264 points it at an individual for any other reason, then they will notify the Safety and  
265 Security Specialist, SRO, and the School Principal or Principal's designee must be  
266 notified immediately, and document the circumstances in a written report.

267  
268 Guardians must attend all training scheduled by the District or the LCSO, keep all their  
269 equipment in serviceable condition, pass firearms qualification at least annually as required  
270 by state law, and maintain their position within the District in good standing. Upon termination  
271 of employment, guardian status is terminated, and all issued equipment must be returned  
272 immediately and appropriately to the School Safety Specialist or his/her designee. At any  
273 point, guardian designation can be withdrawn by the Superintendent with or without cause  
274 and with no appeal rights.

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276 Statutory Authority: 30.15, 776.012, 790.174, 1003.32, 1006.07, 1006.09, 1006.12,  
277 1012.01(2)(a) F.S.

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279 Adopted: 5/9/2023