

Dear School District of Philadelphia Parents and Families,

At the School District of Philadelphia, the safety of our students and staff is our top priority. Right now in Philadelphia, and across the country, there is an increase in gun-related incidents and violence that is taking a devastating toll on our schools and communities. In an effort to increase safety and avoid potentially dangerous situations in our school buildings, **the Office of School Safety will implement periodic weapons screening in middle schools and elementary schools with middle grades starting on Monday, May 9, 2022.**

Starting Monday, 6th through 8th grade students will be subject to periodic weapons screenings. Screenings will take place at six schools per day, and be conducted at every middle and elementary school with middle grades at least once before the end of the school year. Screening operations will:

- Always be conducted by a team of School Safety personnel and in the presence of at least one school leader.
- Include weapons detection using a hand wand or metal detector, depending on the school's enrollment, and a physical check of all bags, backpacks and personal items.
- Be conducted in the morning and, in most cases, will take place in the school's entryway. For schools with higher enrollment, or in situations where screenings in the entryway creates a backlog, students may be moved in small groups to screening areas set up in the auditorium, gymnasium or lunchroom.

Students will be given an opportunity to dispose of any illegal or inappropriate items prior to being screened without consequence. Students who choose not to participate in screening will be referred to the school's leadership. Any weapon found during the screening process will be confiscated and will not be returned. According to [District Policy 218.1](#), a weapon is defined as, but is not limited to, firearms, whether loaded or not; pellet or BB gun; knives; cutting instruments; nunchaku; brass knuckles; electronic shock devices; or mace and any other tool, instrument, or object used or intended to be used to inflict serious bodily injury to another. Any student in possession of a **firearm** will be detained by School Safety and referred to the Philadelphia Police Department.

The District understands that this level of screening may feel intrusive and inconvenient. The Office of School Safety is committed to implementing this process with transparency and sensitivity towards the various and unique social, developmental and societal factors. School Safety personnel will treat **every individual** fairly with dignity and respect. If you have additional questions, please email [schoolsafety@philasd.org](mailto:schoolsafety@philasd.org).

Thank you for partnering with us as we work together to keep our schools and communities safe!

Sincerely,

The School District of Philadelphia  
Office of School Safety