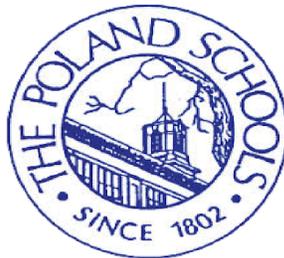


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March 12, 2018

To Poland Local Schools Students, Parents, Faculty and Staff, and Community:

The Poland Local School District is driven by a mission that seeks a quality learning environment for all students. Fundamental to that mission, is providing our students with a safe and welcoming atmosphere conducive to the educational process.

The purpose of this letter is to inform all stakeholders of the District's plan in response to the national student protest movement spurred by student survivors of the recent Parkland, Florida high school shooting. We believe our students' best interest is to allow them to honor those who have lost their lives to gun violence in school, but to do so in a safe and appropriate manner through a means that provides educational value.

While students do not shed their constitutional right to freedom of speech or expression at the doors of our school buildings, the right to free speech is not absolute and may be reasonably restricted if deemed to interfere with our educational mission. As a District, we encourage our students to recognize the importance of civic responsibility. However, a display of activism via protest – even though a valid exercise of protected political speech –disrupts the instructional day and poses a safety risk to our students and staff. This is not sheltered by the First Amendment and is prohibited by the Board of Education.

The safety of our students is paramount and the idea of having students exit our buildings at a well-advertised day and time is contrary to our mission of keeping our children safe. When students enter our building for the day, they become our responsibility. We are accountable for their safety and their whereabouts until the school day concludes. Regardless of the fervor and inspiration behind these movements, safety and accountability cannot be overlooked. That said, our Administration is collaborating with our students and student leadership on several alternatives that support students in this conscientious call to Congress.

The expectations for student attendance and conduct during the school day remain as always, including associated consequences. We will continue to maintain order, plan for student safety, and keep teaching and learning as our focus. Poland Local Schools will continue to be a place where the focus is to maximize the skill and potential of all students for a successful future.

Respectfully shared,

David Janofa, Superintendent of Schools  
Kevin Snyder, PSHS Principal  
David Purins, PMS Principal

**3199 DOBBINS ROAD POLAND, OH 44514-2327**  
**TELEPHONE 330-757-7000 ~ FAX 330-757-2390**

**A Special Note to Students:** Flyers promoting the student protest may not be posted in any District facility or on its grounds. Posting signs requires administrative approval thereby creating a school sanctioned event.

**A Special Note to Employees:** Employees are reminded that they are duty bound by their employment to remain focused on instruction and school safety and are not permitted to engage in any student protest.

**Frequently Asked Questions:**

<p><b>Q:</b> <i>Will students who walk out of school be excused from school?</i></p> <p><b>Answer:</b> For attendance purposes, students are expected to be in their assigned areas at all times. The student handbook is the guide.</p>	<p><b>Q:</b> <i>Can I protest with my child at school?</i></p> <p><b>Answer:</b> No. Visiting adults (parents) do not have the same protected speech rights in school as do students. Having adults enter the school property in order to protest diverts our attention away from the students and places an undue burden on administrators and teachers who are charged with maintaining a safe environment for students.</p>
<p><b>Q:</b> <i>Will teachers be required to continue to teach lessons if students walk out?</i></p> <p><b>Answer:</b> Yes. Teachers will continue teaching unless otherwise assigned because of significant school disruption. This is true every day in our schools.</p>	<p><b>Q:</b> <i>Will students be penalized if they exercise their First Amendment rights to freedom of speech?</i></p> <p><b>Answer:</b> It is impossible to predict the level of disruption posed by students exercising their free speech. Some students will make their voice known without causing disruption while others may not. In any case, as always, our student handbook will be our guide.</p>
<p><b>Q:</b> <i>Why can't the District help students with their protest about school safety in wake of all the recent school shootings?</i></p> <p><b>Answer:</b> Schools must not facilitate any protests on any topics or we will be forced to facilitate them all. We will remain protest neutral and safety vigilant. For example, we do not know how many groups will call for similar protests or counter-protests on this or other issues.</p>	<p><b>Q:</b> <i>Will District faculty and staff be allowed to protest for school safety with students who participate in this national movement?</i></p> <p><b>Answer:</b> Faculty and staff have important assigned duties during the school day, and they must remain on duty to assist with teaching, supervision, and other important roles like safety.</p>
<p><b>Q:</b> <i>Will students be safe if they walk out of the school?</i></p> <p><b>Answer:</b> It is never safe or wise for any student to walk out of school unsupervised, which is why we have specific rules prohibiting such conduct. This is especially so when the date and time of the walk-out has been so well publicized.</p>	<p><b>Q:</b> <i>I teach at the District. What if students bring up the protest in class?</i></p> <p>Acknowledge the students voice and remind them that the school and its employees must remain "protest neutral." Encourage students to learn about the First and Second Amendments and continue on with your lesson plans.</p>