

# Shenandoah Valley School District



January 13, 2026

Dear Families and Staff,

I am writing to share important information regarding a Pennsylvania school safety law that is now in effect and impacts how school districts communicate with families and employees.

Governor Josh Shapiro signed Act 44 of 2025, a new section of the Pennsylvania School Code titled “Parental and Employee Notification of Weapon Incidents.” Effective January 6, 2026, schools are required to notify parents/guardians and school employees when an incident occurs involving the possession of a weapon on school property, on school transportation, or at a school-sponsored activity.

The law requires notification based on where the incident occurs. Because our buildings share a common campus, families and employees will be notified if an incident occurs in any building on the Shenandoah Valley School District campus. If an incident occurs at a school-sponsored activity or on school transportation, the District will notify the appropriate families and employees connected to that setting. Notification is not required when the incident is not directly related to the activity or to the students or staff involved. Unless circumstances require otherwise, the District must issue the notification within 24 hours. The Shenandoah Valley School District will provide these required notifications to families and employees via letter.

To comply with confidentiality requirements, notifications will not include personally identifiable student information. Notices will include only basic details, such as the date and general location of the reported incident.

In the past, the District exercised professional discretion when responding to situations involving inadvertent possession of items not intended as weapons. Depending on the circumstances, this included look-alike items (such as toys) or everyday tools (for example, a small pocketknife or multi-tool accidentally left in a backpack or jacket). Act 44 may result in more frequent notifications, including situations that do not represent an active safety threat. An increase in notices should not be interpreted as decreased safety; rather, it reflects a new legal requirement.

Families can help prevent accidental situations by checking backpacks, jackets, and sports bags and reminding students that prohibited items are not permitted on school grounds, buses, or at school-sponsored activities. In addition, the Shenandoah Valley School District has multiple safety measures in place to help deter incidents involving weapons, including the presence of the Shenandoah Valley School District Campus Police Department, the use of metal detectors, and a backpack scanner on the secondary campus (grades 7–12). Concerns can also be reported to administration or other staff.

Please know that the Shenandoah Valley School District will continue to work closely with our law enforcement partners, threat assessment teams, and safety and security personnel. The well-being of our students and staff remains our highest priority.

Thank you for your continued partnership in keeping Shenandoah Valley safe and supportive for all students and staff.

In Education,

Brian Waite  
Superintendent  
Shenandoah Valley School District



**"Blue Devils"**

***This school district is an equal opportunity provider and employer.  
Educating today's learner .....for tomorrow's opportunities***

