#### School Policy Legal Insider

149 Fifth Ave., 16th Fl. New York, NY 10010-6801

# Plug SCHOOL POLICY Loopholes...

NOW!

# School Policy Legal Insider

# The Plain-English Guide for School Administrators

Dear Educational Administrator:

How many of your school policies have loopholes?

Dangerous loopholes you won't learn about until you get sued or your reputation is tarnished? For example:

- You have a policy on student Internet use... BUT does it protect kids from on-line sexual stalkers?
- ▶ You have a policy on sexual harassment... BUT does it comply with new Title IX changes?
- ▶ You have a policy on renovation contracts... BUT does it save the school day from disruption?

If you're not 100 percent sure, it's not surprising. The law changes constantly. And if your policies aren't upto-date, you may be tempting fate.

So when a student is injured... or an outraged parent complains... or a contractor demands a penalty payment... you may discover--too late--that the policy you relied on falls short. One little loophole is enough to cost you: a nasty lawsuit, negative publicity, and a career setback.

Now you can spot those loopholes early and plug them! Introducing...

School Policy Legal Insider, the only "how-to" monthly guide written especially for administrators like you.

School Policy Legal Insider is much more than just a "news"-letter. It's an early warning system. The Insider anticipates your problems and solves them.

Plus every month you get the Insider's <u>exclusive</u> "working tools": actual model policies, sample letters, memos, forms, contract clauses, and more! Adapt them to fit your needs. Bottom line: You don't just read the Insider; you use it!

Now you can get the next issue of the Insider <u>free!</u>
I'll give you all the details in a moment. But first, let me

tell you how the Insider will become your working partner.

# GET POLICIES WRITTEN AND TESTED BY TOP SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE

Why reinvent the wheel whenever you want to create a new policy or plug loopholes in an old one? Every month School Policy Legal Insider's editors bring you field-tested policies from the country's best-run school districts.

So you learn from others' mistakes, rather than repeat them! For example:

- ▶ A high school principal thought his policy on safeguarding student records was air-tight--until a noncustodial parent stormed into his office demanding her son's transcript. If that principal had the Insider's School Records Policy (based on a proven Boston model), he would have known exactly what to say to ensure FERPA compliance--and avoid a shouting match.
- ▶ Compare the Insider's Model Field Trip Policy with yours. Ours sets up a series of checkpoints and staffs them with monitors, so you don't wind up like the New York City school where a 6th grader wandered away from her class field trip and was raped. Result: A \$2.25 million judgment.
- ▶ See how a Florida school tightened its Student Discipline Policy when students began circulating an "underground" newspaper full of tasteless humor about the faculty and minorities. You may want to plug the First Amendment loophole in your current policy.

#### USE OUR MODEL LETTERS, MEMOS, FORMS AND CONTRACT LANGUAGE

How often do you wrestle with the wording of important letters and memos? You want to say the right thing. More importantly: You don't want to say the wrong thing!

Let School Policy Legal Insider give you a leg up. Month after month, we cure your nasty legal headaches with just the right language. It asserts your rights... cuts your risks... and won't compromise your position. For example:

▶ An irate mother complains about inadequate athletic supervision, which she says led to her son's injury. How do you reassure her that appropriate safeguards will be taken, without admitting to past negligence? The Insider's Model Letter lets you tread the thin line safely.

- ▶ Use the Insider's Model Bid Request to cut the best deal with equipment lessors. Our model establishes a bidding timetable... prevents bait-and-switch tactics... sets a cost-variance leeway... demands a purchase option... and gets quotes for different lease lengths and payment periods. Plus, learn the five "sucker statements" you must never make in a bid request.
- ▶ Don't settle for substandard work from a sloppy contractor. Scare him into doing the job right--and fast--with a legally binding ultimatum to replace him and backcharge him for any added costs. You're in the driver's seat with the Insider's Defective Work Notice.

#### DON'T GET BLINDSIDED BY CHANGES IN THE LAW

Education law changes constantly. New regulations come out, requiring you to revamp your programs.

And court decisions force you to rethink your procedures or run the risk of liability.

Count on School Policy Legal Insider to keep you up-todate on the latest changes in education law. We know your degree is not in law, so we translate the law into plain English. And we lay out your options.

<u>Result</u>: You are never caught off guard. You plan ahead to avoid risks when they are still down the road. And, when you have to call counsel, you are up to speed, zeroing in on the right questions and understanding the answers.

Plus, the Insider's exclusive "Winners & Losers" column shows you how school districts are faring in court. You "go to school" on their mistakes and see how to avoid the costly traps they fell into.

# WHY GO IT ALONE? LET THE INSIDER WORK FOR YOU!

I think by now you can see that School Policy Legal Insider is unique.

It's not just another "news"-letter that you read. It's

a precision tool you use: to fix things... solve problems... and break new ground.

The **Insider** doesn't just rattle off one dull court case after another. It translates the law into clear usable guidelines.

Then it gives you the model policies, letters, and forms, etc., that empower you to implement well thought-out programs and systems.

#### ORDER A FREE SAMPLE ISSUE WITH NO OBLIGATION TO SUBSCRIBE

Why not put School Policy Legal Insider to work for you today, without cost or obligation of any kind? Just complete and mail the enclosed No-Risk Subscription Coupon. For faster service, fax it to (212) 473-8786 or call 1-800-643-8095.

I'll send you the next issue for your approval. Review it carefully. Put some of our model policies, forms, letters, etc., to work in your school. If for any reason--or for no reason--you decide the **Insider** is not for you, write "cancel" on our invoice and you'll owe nothing. Keep your issue--FREE.

But if you find School Policy Legal Insider to be as useful as I think you will, simply honor our invoice. As a new subscriber, you get our special discount rate of only \$195--\$60 off the regular price of \$255 for a one-year subscription (12 monthly issues)!

Why delay? Send for the only monthly newsletter for educational administrators that shows you where the loopholes are in your policies--and how to plug them! You'll be glad you did.

Sincerely,

John M. Striker, Esq

Publisher

P.S. 100% Money-Back Guarantee! If you ever feel School Policy Legal Insider is not absolutely ESSENTIAL to helping you identify and plug loopholes in your policies, you can cancel and receive a full refund at any time during the first year of your subscription-even in the 12th month!--with no questions asked.

# Plug School Policy Loopholes

The Plain English Guide for School Administrators

# INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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# Prevent Besevation Contractor from Interfering with Students

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# **Tighten Your Internet Policy** or Risk Costly Claims

What mischief are your students up to, right now, on the Internet?

- Is Jimmy exchanging e-mail with a pedophile?
- Is Nancy creating a Web page advocating violence against doctors who perform abortions?
- Is enterprising Bill selling copyrighted photos downloaded from Playboy's Web site?
- Does your school's Internet use policy give you the power to stop Internet abuses like these—and head off lability for your school? Not if your policy, like so many others, contains five common loopholes

# Close Five Internet Policy Loopholes

Check your school's policy for the follow-ing five loopholes. Then consider upgrad-ing if. We've included a Model Policy on D. 2 and a purental permission form on D. 3. The policy was drafted with the help of Michael McGuire, an education attor-ncy with the Minnesota law firm of Rider, Bennett, Exan & Arundel. Bennett, Egan & Arundel

1) Parents can suc you. When minor students encounter "objectionable" material on the Internet, parents may sue. Your best defense is a Parental Permission. Form acknowledging the risk that their child may encounter "objectionable" mate ensia may encounter "objectionable" mate-rial. In most cases, says McGurre, a good-learental Permission Form can absolve the school from blame. But many schools fail to get signed Parental Permission Forms.

Result: Parents retain their right to sue your school.

2) Student privacy violated. To shut down an offensive student Web site or protect children from online sex offenders, protect children from online sex offenders, your Internet Use Policy must empower you to monitor student Internet use. Otherwise, cavesdropping on, say, student e-mail "in-boxes" or "out-boxes" may violate a student's privacy rights. Result: Instead of heading off school liability, your monitoring efforts may lead to liability. to liability.

3) FERPA Violation Risks Federal 5) FERPA Violation Risks Federal Funds. Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"), par-ents have the right to inspect student records, which may include e-mail and records of material downloaded from the Internet. But many Internet Use Policiae. fectors of material downtoaded from the Internet. But many Internet Use Policies don't have procedures for organizing and providing these records. Result: your school risks lawsuits from parents and loss of futural funds. of federal funds.

4) Accidental Copyright
Infringement. Most students know
mothing about copyright. Yet many of the
toternet Use Policies we've sees fail to bar
copyright infringement. And if one of your
students innocently downloads copyrighte
materials—even without your knowledge—your school may be liable.
Check out the way our Model Policies
discourages accidental copyright, yin
tions by explaining—and banning.
illegal copyring.

**Avoid Costly Lawsuits** 

Get Model Policies. Letters, Forms and More

Discipline Staff and Students Legally

**Resolve Disputes** with Parents

Protect Students from Harm

Keep Contractors on a Short Leash



The *Insider* is different. You don't just read it. You use it. It solves your problems with "how-to" advice, plus model policies, letters, and forms.

# Use School Policy Legal Insid

Run your school better-and avoid liability-with proven school policies from the best-run schools nationwide, plus exclusive "working tools" like the three examples below.

# MODEL PROCEDURE Plug Overlooked Sexual Harassment Policy Loophole The best sexual harassment policy in the world won't help you if it lacks one key ingredient a compaint procedure carefully designed to accommodate complaint. If he break of such a procedure, clearly the breaker of such a procedure, clearly the breaker of such a procedure, clearly the procedure of such a procedure, clearly the breaker of such a procedure, clearly the procedure of such as the proc HARASSMENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE The Designated Official handling the complient shall investigate the compliant as soon as pleatible, information only (invest name of subcol officials with a "most to know") about the compliant. The Designated Official shall be all investorable steps to assignate the identity of the scorated and the compliants. The Designated of the second and the second and the compliants of the scorated and the compliants of the compliants of the scorated and the compliants of the compliants of the scorated and the compliants of the scorated and the compliants. The accounts with knowledge of the single beatternord. The Designated Official beatternor the compliant shall second all interviews and other assects of the investi-The Designated Official baseling the complaint shall record all interviews and other aspects of the investigation against Data Designation against Data Determinion, and any other materials used to discusses the investigation, the MODEL PROCEDURE

Model policies and step-by-step procedures that translate tricky new laws and scary court decisions into clear action guidelines. Best of all, you can begin using them immediately-with confidence.

When a parent shows you a "restraining order" preventing a voicint spouse or partner from contacting a student, you have to take decisive steps to ensure the served parent doesn't neach the student on school grounds. Otherwise, the parent with the restraining order can hold you will be school segally responsible. Hear's a memo to give to teachers and other a chool staff when a parent shows you a voicint "restraining order." The memo tells vulture the school staff when a parent shows you a voicint "restraining order." The memo tells suddenly these

# MEMO TO SCHOOL STAFF

he mother of a student in our school has obtained a restraining order against her usband. A restraining order is issued by a court when the court finds that one person oses a threat to another one. It orders the potentially damperous person to stay away nom the other one, and his/her children). The court in this instance ruled that the hus-and posed in threat to the safety of the mother and her child.

# MODEL FORM Get approval for School Nurse to Administer Medication

Shield your school from liability if a student saking medication in school suffers student's dector and parents fill out the an adverse reaction. Before you let a student take such medication or permit a student's dector and parents fill out the form below. It should be renewed by them annually.

# AUTHORIZATION TO ADMINISTER MEDICATION TO STUDENTS

Part I: Physician's Statement:

- Name/type of medication
- Downal amount to be administered
- Ecopyercylone to be administered Duration (# of weeks or marchs)
- Signs when medication should be initiated
- 8. Date when medication should be terminated
- ) Special instructions for various storing medical
- 8. Specific restrictions for storage of medication The student conjugate or force and salt admire
- 12. Parable reaction to emireracy (symptoms, use affects, etc.)
- Physician's name Telephone Physician's State Reputation &

Get results when you write letters and staff memos. The Insider's exclusive 'working tools" help you say the right thing without compromising your legal position.

It's like having top flight counsel on call! With the Insider's model forms and agreements, you deal with staff. parents, vendors, etc. from the strongest possible position.

#### **Cut Your Risks**

- Promote safe athletics. Avoid costly sports injuries. The Insider's Model "Safe Sports" Policy shields you from huge liability.
- Screen out sexual predators with legal interview questions. Negotiate the hiring mine field safely. Follow the Insider's Model Interview Checklist.
- Don't let an innocent FERPA violation cost you your federal financing. Here's a 10-point checklist to ensure proper handling, distribution, and safeguarding of student names, addresses, Social Security numbers, grades, class rank, and other sensitive student data.

# Discipline Students and Staff Legally

- Surprise! You can't keep BB guns out of school. Not if your policy on weapons contains an all-toocommon loophole. Plug it now with the Insider's Model Weapons Policy.
- Time to crack down on school bus rowdies? Adopt the Insider's school bus surveillance procedure-complete with forms for drivers to fill out daily. Plus legal guidelines for using video cameras.
- Don't let uncaring or incompetent staff sneak by year after year. Plug the loopholes in your staff policies that let a Minnesota custodian who twirled kids by their wrists escape disciplinary action.
- Want to ban gang colors, vulgar T-shirts, scanty clothing, and body rings? Afraid of provoking protest and a First Amendment challenge? Discover the right approach in the Insider's Model Dress Code.
- What are kids hiding in those baggy pants, hooded sweatshirts, and backpacks? Search and seize beepers, cell phones, and other prohibited items without resistance. Use the Insider's Model Student Search Policy.

## **Win Disputes with Parents**

- Before you meet with a potentially violent parent, take the five precautionary steps outlined in the Insider's "Difficult Parent" Policy. It defuses hostile situations before they explode.
- How to convince disbelieving parents that Johnny is a troublemaker. Follow the Insider's four-step procedure for reporting disciplinary problems and their remedies. It breaks through to parents-and enlists their help.

# ler to achieve 7 key goals .....

 Three proven tactics for discouraging districtjumping. How to tell which parent a child really lives with.

#### **Handle New IDEA Requirements**

- Find out how to enlist parents in the "assessment process"... how other districts handle "inclusion"... how to prepare for "due process" hearings. Use the *Insider's* model notices and letters.
- Follow the Insider's seven guidelines for writing litigation-proof Individual Education Programs.
- Discipline kids with slippery disabilities like
   A.D.D. How to tell when misbehavior is a sign of a disability. The *Insider* reviews hearing officer decisions—and speaks to psychologists—so you know what factors to consider.
- Don't get hit with unnecessary placement costs for "unilateral transfers." Six money-saving steps to take.

## **Run a Tight Ship**

- See how other school districts are negotiating tough labor issues like grievance procedures, health benefits, leaves of absence, drug testing, forced retirement, and probationary employees.
- Terminate employees without taking legal flack.
   Add the Insider's Model At-Will Employment
   Policy to your employee handbook.
- Keep students from writing "we-miss-you" letters to suspended staff. The letters can come back to bite you in administrative hearings.

## **Stop Contractor Rip-Offs**

- Beware of one-sided fine print and boilerplate! The Insider exposes contract tricks. And we deal you the legal aces you need to secure the best terms, cut costs, and protect your rights.
- Heading into renovation hell? Stick the Insider's Model Scheduling Clause in the contract. It assures that work won't disrupt the school day or harm students.
- Get faster responses, better service, and deeper discounts from vendors who plow your parking lot, repair office equipment, collect trash, and clean. Plug office contract loopholes that excuse their screw-ups.

## Keep Up on Fast-Changing Laws

New laws, regs, court cases—they change school administration monthly. *School Policy Legal Insider* is your early warning system.

You gain the foresight to plan ahead, because the *Insider* explains the latest developments, including:

- Family Medical Leave Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Latest federal and state court decisions
- Campus Security Act
- Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Age Discrimination in Employment Act
- OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health)
   Asbestos and Lead
- Paint Disclosure Rules
- Federal Gun-Free School Act of 1994
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- 42 U.S. Code Sections 1981 and 1983
- Plus other essential regulations and codes

## **About Brownstone Publishers**

For 20 years, our nationally recognized newsletters have been simplifying legal jargon for nonlawyers and explaining how to apply model policies to everyday situations, while plugging loopholes.

Our full-time staff of attorneys and specialists are experts at translating legal language into user-friendly, plain English that principals, superintendents, headmasters, deans of students, other educational administrators, and attorneys find easy to read, understand, and use.

# Don't just read it... use it! To solve your problems... cut your risks... handle staff and students... and plug the loopholes in your school policies.

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The Plain-English Guide for School Administrators

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You risk nothing! Put **School Policy Legal Insider** to work in your school for one full year. If at any time during that year, you feel the Insider is not absolutely vital in helping you create and implement more effective school policies, just let me know. I'll promptly refund 100% of your subscription price—even in the 12th month. You keep all your issues FREE. I personally take all the risk!

John M. Striker, Esq. Publisher

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