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EAGLE WOODS ACADEMY

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April 3, 2013

Dear Eagle Woods Academy Families,

The safety of our students at Eagle Woods is our greatest priority, and we are writing to you today to share several proposed changes to enhance the current school safety plan. Eagle Woods Academy is a unique junior and senior high school environment within the DeKalb County School District. The program provides comprehensive educational and affective treatment for students from sixth grade through age 22 from DeKalb County, Rockdale County and the City Schools of Decatur. Eagle Woods offers a therapeutic special education program for students who are identified as having severe emotional and behavioral disorders (SEBD). The students have a wide range of emotional and behavioral difficulties and all are unable to function successfully in other public school environments. While our student population is extremely varied, most of our students have experienced significant problems in many aspects of their lives. We service approximately 100 students within the Dekalb/Rockdale/Decatur area. We are a locked alternative school that provides clinical services, Mindset trained staff (verbal and physical de-escalation), with a small teacher-student ratio.

Due to these situations as well as the recent threats to the safety of schools that have occurred across the US, I would like to enhance the School Safety Plan. I am enforcing students secure their coats and electronic devices at the front door as they enter the building. I am also enforcing book bags be prohibited. These measures would provide some added structure and routine and would visibly provide additional security.

The justification for leaving coats at the door is to assist in preventing weapons from entering the building. Students will leave their coats at the front with staff to reduce the number of unwanted and unsafe items in the building. In order to secure these items and ensure they are maintained and returned to the appropriate student, we will station large trash bins at the door and have staff put labels on the inside of the coat as the students enter. We have three doors the students will use to enter the building. The middle school-aged students would use the middle school door, the female high school-aged students would use the front door and the male high school-aged students would use the third door. This would eliminate students from congregating and co-mingling with peers, especially under-aged peers before school.

Electronic devices cause school disturbance on a daily basis. There have been 36 technology violations this year, most of which happen when students use their phones or try to listen to music during instruction. Other problematic behaviors such as disrespect and disruption happen when students refuse to give the devices to staff. Collecting these devices at the door will decrease the other problematic behaviors that occur due to items being confiscated.

Additionally, we will no longer allow students to carry book bags. Students do not take home textbooks and teachers provide most school materials. By disallowing book bags, we will reduce the staff time getting students to leave personal belongings in their lockers. Our student community has changed over the years. We are serving students who have more than just emotional and behavioral disorders; the difficulty in their own communities and making appropriate choices that will keep them and other

Over

"THE SCHOOL CANNOT LIVE APART FROM THE COMMUNITY"

Students at Eagle Woods deserve a safe environment in which they can learn and grow, and I hope you'll support us in these actions to strengthen the safety plan at our school. We are committed to making every effort and taking every precaution necessary to ensure a safe and secure environment that is conducive to learning for our students and our staff.

If you require any additional information please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

Angela Smith