



# Spotlight on Policy

## *What You Should Do When Students Fight*

- Develop a plan for how you will respond to student fights with your whole school, department, team or even with just those teachers who teach close to you. Have a signal, whistle or air horn that, when used, always indicates a student fight is in progress.
- Walk briskly to the scene — don't run. Get help along the way.
- Assess and evaluate quickly: who's involved, what the time is, who are the witnesses and if weapons are present. Evacuate the area.
- Always start by identifying yourself and demanding in a loud authoritarian voice that the students stop. Use student names if you know them. If not, make a mental note of physical descriptions. However, remain calm, don't issue threats
- Send for assistance from the administration immediately. Indicate whether any medical assistance is required!
- Do not put yourself between fighting students if you can avoid it. But try to remove glasses and any other objects likely to cause injury.
- Make a loud distracting noise, throw a little water on the fighting students, or use a non-toxic substance to create a distraction.
- Do not cause physical harm to the students if you can avoid it — use physical force to separate fighting students only if one is about to cause severe harm to the other.
- Although the law makes it clear that you must do something to attempt to break up a fight, the law also says you DO NOT have to put yourself into harm's way.
- Do not get near students who are using any kind of weapon.
- Immediately after the fight stops, turn in a completed referral sheet to the administration and make a copy for your records. **If a student was injured or you had to apply any force to a student, do not submit anything in writing until you have it reviewed by a person not employed by Norfolk Public Schools who is knowledgeable about your rights.**
- If you have been injured, inform the school administration and have them turn in an employer's report form to the Worker's Compensation office (Risk Management).
- If the student (s) has been injured, have the nurse or administrator do a thorough examination of the student (s) and record marks and bruises and the alleged causes of them.
- If you become the subject of an investigation by the Department of Social Service, Child Protective Services or the police, tell them you want a representative with you before you will talk to them. All such investigators know you have a right to representation and will understand that the investigation will be scheduled through that representative.
- **Keep cool and protect yourself.**