

Whitehall School District

www.whitehallsd.k12.wi.us



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Official Statement: Whitehall School District - Incident of September 29, 2016 - UPDATED 10/3/16

At approximately 7:00 pm on Thursday, September 29, 2016, two students notified a staff member that a third high school student had an unloaded gun in his possession at school and that the gun was in his locker or in the bag that was in his possession.

School administration was notified and in turn notified law enforcement. The student was directly observed by the staff member until administration and law enforcement arrived.

The bag in question was secured quickly and upon verifying that there was an item that looked like a firearm in the bag, the student was also secured and removed to the office area of the school building where law enforcement began their investigation.

Law enforcement officers verified that there was an unloaded .22 caliber handgun in the student's bag.

Upon interview and investigation, it was determined that there was no imminent danger to anyone at school as no ammunition was readily present for the handgun. It was also determined as part of the investigation that the gun was not at school during required school hours.

The handgun was pointed at one student in a locker room in an alleged attempt to "mess with him" after a third student (one of the reporting students) had separately verified that it was not loaded before he contacted a staff member. The firearm was also "dry fired" twice although the direction it was being pointed in is somewhat ambiguous at this point.

Information obtained also lead school and law enforcement representatives to believe this was an isolated event and that there was no reason to believe there was any intention to cause bodily harm to anyone in or around our school buildings. This fact will not impact the District's handling of this situation as regardless of intent or whether or not ammunition was present, this is serious breach of the public trust and will not be tolerated in any manner.

The bulk of the evening's Homecoming events were allowed to continue after the situation was determined to be under control and the student had been placed in police custody, but the Homecoming Bon Fire that was scheduled to take place was cancelled.

Law enforcement presence was maintained throughout the night's events and the student was taken off site by police at approximately 9:15 PM. He has also been suspended from school pending a hearing for permanent expulsion from The Whitehall School District.

A statement of facts was shared with those in attendance at Thursday night's Homecoming activities and all parents of the District were notified by email between 6:15 and 7:15 am on Friday, September 30, 2016 as well as by a follow up call and email using the school's messaging system at approximately 7:00 PM.

Any follow up information requests should be submitted to Mike Beighley, Superintendent at 715-538-4374.

WHITEHALL SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

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The Whitehall School District does not discriminate against pupils or employees in its educational programs or activities, or in employment.