

Sudbury Public Schools

September 30, 2010

Good afternoon,

I want to share with you an incident that occurred on Nixon's Bus #8 on the drive home yesterday, Wednesday, September 29. A student brought what appears to have been a cap gun to school, kept it in the backpack during the school day at Nixon, and then took it out on the bus ride home. We are not aware of any children having seen it during the school day. A number of children on the bus saw it and reported hearing a "pop". Due to the high noise level that is typical on a bus, the pop noise was not heard at the front of the bus or by the driver. Several of the children on the bus thought that it might be a real gun, others felt it was a toy, and some were unsure, though none of them reported it to the driver.

This incident was reported to Nixon administrators this morning, and we began an investigation in conjunction with the Sudbury police. SPS staff and the police viewed a videotape of the bus during the time in question and interviewed children who were on the bus. Based on that information, the police feel that it was, in fact, a cap gun. We carefully inspected the bus and school today and are certain this toy gun was not brought on the bus or to school today. Though clearly bringing a cap gun was in very poor judgment, we agree with the police that the children were never in danger.

I want to assure you that we take situations like this very seriously. Administrators met with all of the children on the bus about the importance of telling an adult if there is any question of an unsafe situation. We assured the students that this was not a real gun, while reiterating that toy weapons are not allowed and having them will result in disciplinary consequences. The Sudbury Police have determined that no additional police action will be taken. Nevertheless, the school will be taking action within the construct of our Code of Conduct. This type of behavior is serious and typically results in consequences that may include suspension from school. We will be working with the family of the student involved and following SPS protocols for dealing with these situations.

If your child has or has access to a toy gun or weapon of any kind, it is important to understand that we will treat it as a real weapon until we know for certain that it is not. Students should never bring toy guns or weapons on the bus or to school. Even if a child or parent feels comfortable with such a toy, it can cause fear or distress in other children or families, and a major disruption of the educational environment. We urge you to remind your child of the importance of immediately reporting any possibly unsafe situation to the closest adult, and again to you at home, even if they think someone else had reported it.

Again, we feel confident that the children were never in danger. However we appreciate that a few children may have been fearful. If your child was one of those who saw the cap gun or who heard about it, and is worried, feel free to contact the guidance counselor.

My thanks to the support and cooperation of the Sudbury Policy and the work of our staff to investigate and assure the safety of our students.

We appreciate your attention and support in this matter.

John