

# “Alianna’s Alert”: A Reminder to School Districts About Parent Notification

By Leighann K. Fink

Through the passing of House Bill 66, “Alianna’s Alert” went into effect on April 5, 2019, with the hope of increasing safety measures for Ohio school children. “Alianna’s Alert,” prompted by the violent murder of Alianna Defreeze (14 years of age) on her way to school, mandates all school districts to notify a child’s parents or guardians within two hours, or 120 minutes after the start of the school day, if the child is absent from school. The new law requires the board of education of each school district to adopt a written policy regarding the procedure for contacting parents or guardians and requires parents or guardians to provide a current address and telephone number for contact purposes.

If a student is absent, without prior notification of the absence from parents or guardians, the attendance officer must make at least one attempt to contact parents or guardians by (1) a personal telephone call; (2) an automated telephone call that includes verification that each call was placed and acknowledgment that either (a) the call was answered by the intended parent or guardian or (b) a voicemail message was left with the requisite information; (3) a notification through the school district’s automated student information system; (4) a text-based notification; (5) an e-mail notification; (6) a personal visit to the student’s current residence; or (7) any other type of notification procedure adopted by the school district’s board of education.

The notification requirement does not apply to students enrolled in home-based, online, or internet/computer-based instruction, nor does it apply if a student is expected to be at an off-campus activity, such as the college credit plus program. Importantly, if “Alianna’s Alert” is complied with in “good faith,” a school district, its employees, and the board of education are not liable in a civil action for damages in case of injury, death, or loss to person or property arising from an employee’s action or inaction.

Please contact any of the listed professionals regarding the necessary procedures to follow for a school district to be in compliance with “Alianna’s Alert.”

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