

HCPSS Student Code of Conduct

Introduction

The Howard County Public School System is committed to providing a safe, engaging and supportive learning environment where all policies are enforced fairly and consistently. Student disciplinary regulations emphasize instruction and rehabilitation rather than punishment, and are designed to foster and reward appropriate behavior and keep students connected to school so they can graduate college and career ready.

The HCPSS Student Code of Conduct provides a framework to support behavioral goals and disciplinary policies. All students are expected to be aware of and abide by this Student Code of Conduct. Parents/guardians are encouraged to read the Student Code of Conduct carefully and to discuss the information with their children.

Philosophical Statement

Schools should provide the instruction and support necessary to meet students' academic and behavioral needs, and identify fair and developmentally appropriate behavioral expectations for all members of the school community. Educators and other adults in the school should teach students to behave in ways that conform to these policies and contribute to academic success. This is achieved by reinforcing positive behavior, preventing misbehavior before it occurs, supporting students in overcoming challenges, and fostering positive relationships among all members of the school community.

Research shows that students are more likely to accept responsibility for their actions and the consequences of their behavior when school discipline is administered fairly, equitably and consistently. Schools must also employ due process protections when enforcing discipline, and must not allow harsh or exclusionary discipline to disproportionately impact specific groups of students, including but not limited to students of color, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, male students, and LGBTQ students.

Student Responsibilities

Students share responsibility with school staff for maintaining an environment of mutual respect and dignity in the school. Students take an active role in making school a supportive, safe and welcoming place for all students and staff in these ways:

- Demonstrate pride in self, in the future, and in school by arriving on time, dressing appropriately and being prepared to focus on your studies.
- Be respectful and courteous to fellow students, parents/guardians and school staff.
- Seek the most peaceful means of resolving conflict, and obtain the assistance of teachers, administrators, parent/guardian or school staff when unable to resolve conflicts.
- Follow school rules and policies, and contribute to a positive school climate by behaving appropriately, even when not specifically asked to do so.
- Recognize how your conduct affects other students and school staff, and make every reasonable effort to restore relationships and correct any harm caused to others in the school community.
- Seek access to and complete make-up work while out of school for disciplinary reasons.

Staff Responsibilities

Students who have meaningful relationships with caring adults in the school are less likely to engage in disruptive behavior, be absent, or drop out of school. School staff members should take the initiative in developing positive, meaningful relationships with students. When disruptive behavior does occur, school staff will use professional discretion when applying these consequences/responses and interventions in a progressive manner, to teach students appropriate behavior and correct any harm that results from their behavior.

Staff will:

- Create and promote a positive, supportive, safe and welcoming school environment that is conducive to teaching and learning.
- Be respectful and courteous to students, parents/guardians and other school staff.
- Establish clear expectations for behavior, take an instructional approach to discipline, and acknowledge positive and appropriate conduct by students.
- Involve families, students and the community in fostering positive behavior and student engagement.
- Ensure that clear, developmentally appropriate and proportional consequences are applied for misbehavior as outlined in applicable discipline policies.
- Implement graduated, progressive consequences for recurring inappropriate behavior.
- Administer discipline rules fairly, consistently and equitably, regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, gender, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
- Remove students from the classroom only as a last resort, and return students to class as soon as possible.
- Promptly notify parents/guardians if their child is suspended and if there is any investigation by law enforcement or school resource officers related to school discipline.

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- Make every reasonable effort to communicate with and respond to parents/guardians in a timely manner and in a way that is accessible and easily understood.
- Provide students who are suspended or expelled from school with make-up work and allow them to complete the work for credit so they do not fall behind academically.

Parent and Community Responsibilities

Parents/guardians and community members play an important role in establishing a positive school climate where students will thrive. Parents can help students and staff members promote a supportive, safe and welcoming school environment in these ways:

- Talk with their child about appropriate conduct at school.
- Be respectful and courteous to other students, fellow parents/guardians and school staff.
- Read and be familiar with school policies, regulations and rules.
- Have regular contact with school staff and make every effort to ensure that their child maintains regular school attendance.
- Be involved in conferences, hearings and other disciplinary matters concerning their child.
- Help their child access supportive groups or programs designed to improve his/her conduct, such as counseling, after-school programs, and mental health services available in the school and community.
- Promptly share any concerns or complaints with school officials and work with school staff and administrators to address any behavioral problems their child may experience.

Behavior-Related Offenses and Responses

In accordance with Policy 9200, the Board believes that disciplinary responses should encourage responsible actions, promote the development of self-discipline and change inappropriate behavior. Discipline will be administered using a continuum model that includes conferences, detention, alternative educational settings, student reassignment, suspension and expulsion.

On the following pages is a non-exhaustive list of possible responses to student behavior. Factors to consider when determining the appropriate response may include patterns of behavior, impact on the school community and the overall severity of the infraction.

Offenses included in the Student Code of Conduct apply to behaviors that occur on school property, at school-related activities, or when students are otherwise subject to the authority of the Howard County Public School System. Disciplinary action may be taken for off-campus incidents if the action could have an adverse effect on the order and general welfare of the schools.

In addition to the responses listed on the following pages, loss of credit for an assignment or course may be appropriate. Restitution for loss or damage may be requested and law enforcement will be involved when appropriate.

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The following examples constitute a listing of possible responses and interventions that may be used by a staff member in responding to a student's inappropriate behavior. The responses within each level are examples and are not listed in a particular order of use.

LEVELS OF RESPONSES	
LEVEL 1	<p>Examples of Classroom, Support and Teacher-Led Responses These responses are designed to teach appropriate behavior, so students are respectful, and can learn and contribute to a safe environment. Teachers are encouraged to try a variety of teaching and classroom management strategies. When appropriate, teachers may engage the student's support system to ensure successful learning and consistency of responses, and change the conditions that contribute to the student's inappropriate or disruptive behavior. These responses should be used in a progressive fashion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom-based responses (verbal correction, written reflection/apology) • Reminders/redirection, role play, daily progress sheet • Check in with school counselor/resource specialist • Parent outreach (contact parent via telephone, e-mail or text) • Conference with student • Verbal redirection • Time out for written reflection/apology • Loss of privileges
LEVEL 2	<p>Examples of Classroom, Support and Removal Responses These responses are designed to teach appropriate behavior, so students behave respectfully, can learn, and contribute to a safe environment. Many of these responses engage the student's support system, and are designed to alter conditions that contribute to the student's inappropriate or disruptive behavior. These responses aim to correct behavior by stressing its severity and acknowledging potential implications for future harm while still keeping the student in school. These responses should be used in a progressive fashion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom-based responses (e.g. verbal correction, written reflection/apology, reminders/redirection, role play, daily progress sheet) • Parent/guardian and student conference (with teacher) • Parent outreach (Contact parent via telephone, email or text) • Peer mediation • Temporary removal from class • Loss of privileges/removal from extracurricular activities
LEVEL 3	<p>Examples of Support, Removal and Administrative Responses These responses engage the student's support system to ensure successful learning, and to alter conditions that contribute to the student's inappropriate or disruptive behavior. These responses aim to correct behavior by stressing its severity and acknowledging potential implications for future harm while still keeping the student in school. These responses may involve the short-term removal of a student from the classroom. Such a removal should be limited as much as practicable without undermining its ability to adequately address the behavior. These responses should be used in a progressive fashion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent/guardian and student conference (with administrator) • Detention • Temporary removal from class • Behavioral contract • Loss of privileges/removal from extracurricular activities • Campus clean-up • In-school suspension • In-school intervention • Extended school day
LEVEL 4	<p>Examples of Support, Removal, Administrative and Out-of-School Exclusionary Responses These responses address serious behavior while keeping the student in school, or when necessary, due to the nature of the behavior or potential implications for future harm, remove a student from the school environment. They promote safety of the school community by addressing self-destructive and dangerous behavior, and should be used in a progressive fashion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted access • Request for alternative educational setting • Referral to Student Support Team • Parent/guardian and student conference (w/administrator) • Loss of privileges/removal from extracurricular activities • In-school suspension • In-school intervention • Short-term suspension <p>Parent/guardian notification required</p>
LEVEL 5	<p>Examples of Long-term Administrative, Out-of-School Exclusionary and Referral Responses (May be Administrator or District Staff-Led) These responses remove a student from the school environment for an extended period of time because of the severity of the behavior and potential implications for future harm. They may involve the placement of the student in a safe environment that provides additional structure and services. These responses promote the safety of the school community by addressing self-destructive and dangerous behavior, and should be used in a progressive fashion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term out-of-school suspension • Extended-out-of-school suspension • Expulsion • Request for alternative educational setting • Referral to Student Support Team • Recommend for further action <p>Parent/guardian notification required</p>

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KEY	LEVEL 1 Classroom, Support and Teacher-Led Responses	LEVEL 2 Classroom, Support and Removal Responses	LEVEL 3 Support, Removal and Administrative Responses	LEVEL 4 Support, Removal, Administrative and Out-of-School Exclusionary and Referral Responses	LEVEL 5 Long-term Administrative, Out-of-School Exclusionary and Referral Responses (May be Administrator or District Staff-Led)
	← 1	2	3	4	5 →

Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism	Academic dishonesty through cheating, copying, plagiarizing or altering records, or assisting another in such actions. Plagiarizing, such as by taking someone else's work or ideas (for students grades 6–12); forgery, such as faking a signature of a teacher or parent; or cheating. Action taken by a student that is deemed inappropriate based on information, rules, guidelines or procedures found in Policy 8120. **				
Alcohol Violation			Possession or use of any alcoholic substance, including constructive possession and possession with intent to sell, deliver or distribute. (Policy 9230) **		
Arson/Fire Violation			Attempting to, aiding in, or setting fire to (or in) a school building or to other school property. **		
Assault and/or Battery on Staff (includes threat against and/or physical attack on staff)			<p>Assault – Any willful attempt or threat to inflict harm upon another person or any display of force or expression that would give the victim reasonable fear of harm. An assault may be physical, oral or written.</p> <p>Battery I – The unlawful touching of another person by the aggressor or by some substance put into motion by the aggressor, which is not consented to by the other person.</p> <p>Battery II – Battery I accompanied by circumstances which reflect the student's blatant disregard for the safety of staff members or other persons evidenced by, but not limited to, the student's intentional conduct, disregard of directions, or the fact that the battery resulted in serious bodily harm. (Policy 9270) **</p>		
Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment or Intimidation	Intentional conduct, including verbal, physical or written conduct, or an intentional electronic communication that creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student's or staff member's educational benefits, opportunities or performance, or with their physical or psychological well-being and is motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, physical or mental ability or disability, or threatening or seriously intimidating; and occurs on school property at a school activity or event or on a school bus; or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school or workplace, including any acts of cyberbullying, harassment or intimidation. (Policy 1060)				
Bus Misbehavior	Failure to comply with expected student behaviors while on school buses or to interfere with safe transport of students is a violation of this policy. (Policy 9200) **				
Class Cutting	Failing to attend a class, after arrival at school, without an excused reason. Missing class for more than 20 minutes will be treated as an absence for that class (Policy 9010). Persistently failing to attend a scheduled class, after arrival at school, without excused reasons.				
Destruction of Property/Vandalism	Causing accidental or intentional damage, destruction or defacement (including graffiti) to school/other's property. **				
Discrimination		Conduct and/or behavior related to race, color, creed, national origin, religion, physical or mental disability, age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, that creates a hostile or offensive educational environment or substantially interferes with an educational environment; or otherwise limits a student's ability to participate in or benefit from their educational program. (Policy 1010)			
Disrespect	Making intentional and harmful gestures, verbal or written comments, including profane language, or symbols to others. Being insubordinate: repeatedly or persistently disrespectful in defiance of authority.				
Disruption	Intentionally engaging in behavior distracting from the learning environment or school related activities including behavior that originates off campus and/or affects the safety of others. (This can include the use of technology and social media.)				

**Apply extended suspension and expulsion only to Grades 6–12.

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Dress Code Violation	Wearing attire that is disruptive to the school environment, that promotes illegal or harmful activities, or that could endanger the health or safety of that student or others during school hours and school related activities. (Policy 9210)				
Drug Violation			Possession or use of (including constructive possession and possession with the intent to sell, give, or distribute) any inhalants or other intoxicants; controlled dangerous substances including prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicines/products look-a-likes, and substances represented as controlled dangerous substances; or drug paraphernalia. (Policy 9230) **		
Electronics, Computer/Communication Misuse	Any unauthorized use of computers, software, Internet, network or other technology; accessing inappropriate websites; misuse of account credentials; disrupting the normal operation of a technology system. (Policy 3040, Policy 8080) **				
Electronics, Personal Communication Device	Behavior not in compliance with the responsible use of the Technology Agreement policy 8080 and or Personal Communication Device guidelines laid out in the Student Handbook. Inappropriate use of any electronic device carried, worn or transported by a student to receive or communicate messages.				
Explosives			Possession, sale, distribution, detonation or threat of detonation of an incendiary or explosive material or device. **		
Extortion		The process of obtaining property from another, with or without that person's consent, by wrongful use of force, fears or threat. **			
Failure to Serve Assigned Consequences	Failure to serve detention, suspension or other assigned consequences. **				
False Alarms/ Bomb Threats			Initiating a warning of a fire or other catastrophe without valid cause or discharging a fire extinguisher. Making a bomb threat or threatening a school. **		
Fighting	A hostile confrontation with physical contact involving two or more students				
Gambling	Wagering money or property.				
Gang Activity			Committing, attempting to commit, or soliciting of two or more crimes; or acts by a juvenile that would be a crime if committed by an adult. (Policy 9290) **		
Hazing				Participation in any intentional or reckless act directed against another for the purpose of initiation into, affiliation with, or maintenance of membership in an organization. (Policy 1060)	
Indecent Exposure		Exposure to sight of the private parts of the body in a lewd or indecent manner.			
Leaving School Grounds Without Permission			Leaving school grounds during regular school hours without written or verbal permission from a parent or someone listed on the emergency procedure card. **		
Physical Attack			Unwelcome, aggressive action, with physical contact, directed at another person, student or non-student, on school grounds or at a school-related activity; or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school or workplace. **		

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Serious Bodily Injury					Causing an injury that involves a substantial risk of death; extreme physical pain; protracted and obvious disfigurement; or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ or mental faculty. (Policy 9200)
Sexual Activity		Behavior of a sexual nature including public displays, consensual sexual activity, possession of pornographic materials. **			
Sexual Discrimination		Includes sexual harassment, sexual assault and sexual violence and is characterized by unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that interferes with a student's ability to learn, study, work, achieve, or participate in school activities or with an employee's/third party's term, condition or privilege of employment/relationship with the school system. Sexual discrimination can be committed by a student, employee or third party. (Policy 1020) **			
Stalking					A malicious course of conduct that includes approaching or pursuing another where the person intends to place, knows or reasonably should have known the conduct would place another in reasonable fear of; serious bodily injury or death; assault in any degree; sexual assault in any degree; or which might cause a third party to suffer from any of the above actions.
Tardiness	Reporting late to school or class when the day/period begins. Missing class more than 20 minutes equals one class absence. Extended tardiness may be counted as a partial or full day absence from school. (Policy 9010)				
Theft	Taking or obtaining the property of another without permission or knowledge of the owner.				
Threat to Students	Threatening language (verbal or written/electronic; implicit or explicit) or physical gestures directed toward another student or group of students.**				
Tobacco Violation			Possession or use of any tobacco or tobacco products, cigarette rolling papers, or electronic cigarette products. (Policy 9240)		
Trespassing Violation			Entrance onto school property by a currently registered student at the school who has been suspended or expelled from the property or student who has been denied access to the property as a result of administrative action. (Policy 3020)		
Truancy	An absence for a school day or any portion of a school day for any reason other than those cited as lawful and/or failure to bring a note written by a parent to verify a lawful absence. (Policy 9010)				
Weapons Violation (Firearms, Other Guns, Other Weapons)			Possession of an object or implement capable of causing harm or used to cause harm to another. This includes all guns, knives, and any implement, visible or concealed, possessed under a circumstance that would reasonably lead a person to believe it was a weapon or would be used as a weapon. Weapons are prohibited on school property, school buses, vehicles on school property and at school-related activities. (Policy 9250) **		

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Responses for Violations of Behavior and Discipline Policies

The professional staff at a school has the responsibility for taking appropriate actions when a student is involved in a situation that disrupts the learning environment of a school. When determining the consequences, they take the following into consideration:

- The age-appropriateness of the response.
- The severity of the incident.
- A student's previous violations and/or responses for the same or a related offense.
- If the offense interfered with the responsibility/rights/privileges/property of others.
- If the offense posed a threat to the health or safety of others.
- If the student has an Individualized Education Plan or a 504 Plan.
- The logical relationship between the offense and the response.
- The age-appropriateness of the consequence.
- Any specific responses articulated in Board of Education Policy.

Alternative Education Setting – A setting outside of the home school designed to accommodate the needs of students who have demonstrated the need for significant academic or behavioral support (Policy 9200). Alternative education settings include but are not limited to:

- **Evening School** – An interim disciplinary placement providing educational opportunities for selected middle and high school students that takes place after normal school hours.
- **Gateway Program** – An alternative education program within the Homewood Center, established for students with significant behavioral and academic difficulties whose needs cannot be met in the home school.
- **In-school Alternative Education Program** – An alternative education program within a comprehensive school that provides participating students with academic and behavioral support, opportunities to learn conflict resolution and anger management strategies, social skills instruction, intensive case management services, and enhanced family outreach and support services.

Corporal Punishment – The Board of Education prohibits the use of corporal punishment, which is defined as physical punishment or undue physical discomfort inflicted on the body of a student for the purpose of maintaining discipline or to enforce school rules.

Detention – The placement of a student in a supervised school setting during the school day, before or after school, and on Saturdays.

Restricted Access – Limitation of a student's presence on school property.

Suspension – the denial of a student's right to attend regular classes or school for a specified period of time for cause. Suspension includes extended suspension, in school suspension, short-term suspension or long-term suspension.

- **In-School Suspension** – The removal of a student within the school building from the student's current education program to another location within the school building for up to but not more than 10 school days in a school year for disciplinary reasons as determined by the principal.
- **Short-Term Suspension** – The removal of a student from school for up to but not more than three school days for disciplinary reasons as determined by the principal.
- **Long Term Suspension** – The removal of a student from school for 4–10 school days for disciplinary reasons as determined by the principal.
- **Extended-Suspension** – The exclusion of a student from school for 11–45 school days for disciplinary reasons as determined by the Superintendent/Designee.

In-school Intervention – The opportunity afforded a student, after the student is removed to an alternate location within the school, to continue to:

- Appropriately progress in the general curriculum.
- Receive the special education and related services specified on the student's IEP if the student is a student with a disability in accordance with COMAR 13A.05.01.
- Receive instruction commensurate with the program afforded to the student in the regular classroom.
- Participate with peers as they would in their current education program to the extent appropriate.

Expulsion – The exclusion of a student from the student's regular school program for 45 school days or longer as determined by the Superintendent/Designee.

Copies of entire policies are available at www.hcpss.org or can be requested from the Public Information Office at 410-313-6682.