

HCPSS Student Code of Conduct

Student Code of Conduct

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) is committed to providing a safe, engaging and supportive learning environment where all policies are enforced fairly and consistently. HCPSS policies and 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. HCPSS employees will follow the Student Code of Conduct when supporting students and determining consequences for violations.

HCPSS Student, Staff, Family and Community Commitments

Overarching Commitments

The connections we establish by valuing our students, families and colleagues will empower our children to achieve success. All operations will be responsive, accountable, efficient and student-centered. Schools, families and community partners, working together, will deliver on these overarching commitments through a focus on student-centered practices, inclusive relationships, and responsive and efficient operations.

Student Expectations

- Attend and engage in all learning experiences.
- Complete independent learning experiences and submit assignments in a timely manner.
- Give your best effort and persist in your work.
- Seek clarification, when needed, to understand the expectations for grading and attendance.
- Set personal goals and be aware of your academic progress.
- Ask questions and actively seek assistance from teachers and other school staff when you need support.
- Build positive and supportive relationships with students and staff, demonstrating the acceptance of differences, with regards to, but not limited to, race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, language, disability, etc.
- Practice self-care strategies and seek well-being supports when needed.
- Be knowledgeable about HCPSS policies, regulations, and available resources for students.
- Recognize how actions affect other students and school staff and, if harm occurs, that there is an opportunity to restore relationships.
- Avoid participating in any behavior or activity that intentionally or unintentionally causes harm to yourself or others.
- Create a learning environment to support your academic success.
- Co-create a positive classroom community where all students are able to learn in a supportive, safe, and welcoming environment.
- Seek and participate in opportunities to express values, opinions, beliefs, and perspectives in a respectful and civil manner.

Staff Responsibilities

- Be knowledgeable about HCPSS policies, regulations, and available resources to support students and staff.
- Establish a positive school culture that focuses on building relationships with staff, students, families and community through restorative justice implementation.
- Support students' social-emotional skills development by providing a safe, nurturing, and inclusive culture that embraces diversity and racial equity.
- Plan and implement high quality, engaging instruction that meets the needs of diverse learners using Maryland College and Career Readiness standards and HCPSS curriculum.
- Adhere to HCPSS expectations for consistent delivery of instructional content and messaging.
- Ensure students receive required ESOL and special education services, Section 504 accommodations, and other necessary supports to address diverse learning needs.
- Monitor, support, and co-create a classroom community where all students can learn in a positive, supportive, safe, and welcoming environment.
- Encourage students to establish a learning environment that supports their engagement.
- Seek out support, when needed, for professional and/or technological challenges.
- Prioritize self-care practices/strategies and personal well-being. Resources are available to support you.
- Accept and support students' identities and experiences with regards to, but not limited to, race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, language, and disability. Demonstrate how different backgrounds being represented in the classroom can enhance student engagement.
- Acknowledge and seek to correct personal biases and assumptions about students' backgrounds.
- Communicate with families in a timely manner that is accessible and easily understood.
- Cooperate, coordinate, and collaborate with families to enhance learning opportunities, personal and academic growth, and school success for all students.
- Acknowledge positive and appropriate student conduct, while striving to recognize and eliminate disproportionality in discipline. Administer discipline fairly, consistently, and equitably, as required.
- Apply de-escalation strategies and provide time and space for students and/or staff to reset. Request support as needed.

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Family Best Practices

- Support your child’s attendance and engagement in all learning experiences.
- Create a learning environment at home to support your child’s academic and social-emotional learning.
- Encourage and reinforce the importance of your child building positive relationships by demonstrating the acceptance of differences with regards to, but not limited to, race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, language, disability, etc.
- Support your child in using self-care strategies to help achieve their goals and maintain well-being.
- Establish regular communication with your child’s teachers to clarify learning expectations and support academic and social-emotional progress.
- Encourage your child to seek assistance and support from HCPSS staff and advocate for them, when necessary.
- Be active in your child’s educational growth by participating in family activities that support learning and well-being outside of the school setting.
- Send your child to school prepared and ready to learn and, upon returning home, assist them with homework and other school assignments.
- Review Parent Portal and Canvas updates/messages for student progress reports and report cards and to monitor attendance and academic progress.

- Be knowledgeable about HCPSS policies, regulations, and available resources to support your child.
- Work with staff to reinforce consequences and lessons learned from violations of the Code of Conduct.

Community Partners Support

- Establish and maintain positive relationships with all stakeholders.
- Provide resources (human, financial, etc.) to support the success of school stakeholders.
- Participate in school activities as opportunities to build relationships that are supportive and culturally responsive.
- Promote and practice making school a positive, supportive, safe, and welcoming place for all students and staff.
- Be knowledgeable about HCPSS policies and regulations.
- Seek opportunities to develop community partnerships.
- Encourage and reinforce the importance of students building positive relationships by demonstrating the acceptance of differences with regards to, but not limited to, race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, language, disability etc.
- Help students and families access supportive groups or programs designed to improve their academic outcomes, such as counseling, after-school programs, and mental health services available in the school and community.
- Invest in student achievement and well-being.

LEVELS OF RESPONSES

These responses should be used in a progressive fashion, with lower level responses being used before implementing higher level responses.

LEVEL 1	<p>Classroom, Support Responses (Staff-Led)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These responses are designed to teach appropriate behavior and build and restore relationships, so students understand their impact on others, can learn, and can contribute to a safe environment. • 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.
LEVEL 2	<p>Classroom, Support, and Removal Responses (Staff-Led)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These responses are designed to teach appropriate behavior and build and restore relationships, so students behave respectfully, understand their impact on others, and 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.
LEVEL 3	<p>Support and Removal Responses (Administrator-Led)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These responses engage the student’s support system to ensure successful learning, to build and restore relationships, and to alter conditions that contribute to the student’s inappropriate or disruptive behavior. • These responses may involve the short-term removal of a student from the classroom. Such a removal should be limited as much as possible without undermining its ability to adequately address the behavior.
LEVEL 4	<p>Support, Removal, and Out-of-School Exclusionary Responses (Administrator-Led)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 behavior that is dangerous to the student or the community.
LEVEL 5	<p>Long-term, Out-of-School Exclusionary and Referral Responses (Administrator-Led)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These responses remove a student from the school environment for an extended period of time because of the severity of the behavior and potential for future harm. • They may involve the placement of the student in an alternate safe environment that provides additional structure and services.

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Responses for Violations of Behavior and Discipline Policies

HCPSS employees have 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 severity of the incident.
- A student’s previous violations and/or responses for the same or a related offense.
- Whether the offense interfered with the rights/privileges/responsibilities/property of others.
- Whether the offense posed a threat to the health or safety of themselves or others.
- Whether the student has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), 504 Plan, or Behavioral Intervention 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.

Responses are NOT listed in a particular order of use. They should be used in a progressive and integrated fashion.

LEVEL 1: Examples of Classroom, Support Responses (Staff-Led)		
Redirect/Correct Behavior and Support Student Growth	Improve Lagging Skill(s)	Prevent and/or Reduce Harm (For the Student or Others)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversation with student • Check-in/checkout • Behavior charts • Data collection • Verbal correction • Written reflection/apology or reminders/redirection • Role-play • Daily progress/feedback form • General social-emotional skill instruction (SEL) and practice (e.g., morning meetings, Flex Time) • Identification of lagging skills or skill gaps • Additional PBIS strategies • Restorative justice practices • Parent outreach (two-way communication) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social-emotional skills instruction (SEL) • Conference with Student Services staff (e.g., school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, alternative education teacher, liaison, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time and space provided (in or out of class) for de-escalation and/or to receive additional support • Restorative justice practices (e.g., circles, conferencing, peer mediation) • Temporary loss of classroom privileges

LEVEL 2: Examples of Classroom, Support, and Removal Responses (Staff-Led)		
Redirect/Correct Behavior and Support Student Growth	Improve Lagging Skill(s)	Prevent and/or Reduce Harm (For the Student or Others)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Level 1 Responses • Parent and student conference with teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Level 1 Responses • Targeted social-emotional skill instruction (SEL) • Referral to Student Support Team (SST) or Instructional Intervention Team (IIT) for problem-solving and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Level 1 Responses • Time and space provided for an extended period (in or out of class) for de-escalation with the assistance of an adult, if needed, and/or to receive additional support • Loss of privileges

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LEVEL 3: Examples of Support and Removal Responses (Administrator-Led)		
Redirect/Correct Behavior and Support Student Growth	Improve Lagging Skill(s)	Prevent and/or Reduce Harm (For the Student or Others)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Level 1 and Level 2 Responses Parent and student conference with administrator Behavioral contract created with student input School community service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Level 1 and Level 2 Responses Referral to SST or IIT to consider additional supports and interventions In-school intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Level 1 and Level 2 Responses Detention/Extended school day In-school suspension Removal from extracurricular activities

LEVEL 4: Examples of Support, Removal, and Out-of-School Exclusionary Responses (Administrator-Led)		
Redirect/Correct Behavior and Support Student Growth	Improve Lagging Skill(s)	Prevent and/or Reduce Harm (For the Student or Others)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 Responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 Responses Referral to SST or IIT to consider alternative education services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 Responses Restricted access Short-term suspension*
<i>Prompt written parent/guardian notification required</i>		

LEVEL 5: Examples of Long-term, Out-of-School Exclusionary and Referral Responses (Administrator-Led)		
Redirect/Correct Behavior and Support Student Growth	Improve Lagging Skill(s)	Prevent and/or Reduce Harm (For the Student or Others)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, and Level 4 Responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, and Level 4 Responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, and Level 4 Responses Long-term suspension* Extended suspension** Expulsion** Consultation with a School Support Team member
<i>Prompt written parent/guardian notification required</i>		

* Per House Bill 425/Senate Bill 651, suspensions and expulsions for Pre-K through second grade students will be limited except in extreme circumstances.

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

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Definitions

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 accommodations as specified in the student's 504 Plan.
- 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.

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 removal of a student from school for 11–45 school days for disciplinary reasons as determined by the Superintendent/Designee.

For students in need of support or assistance, please reach out to your school counselor or other student services staff.

For general information on HCPSS student mental health and well-being efforts, please contact the Department of Program Innovation and Student Well-Being at 410-313-6776 or visit: hcpssne.ws/mentalhealth.

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.

In accordance with Maryland Law, students in prekindergarten, kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 may not be expelled from school unless required by federal law. Students in these grades may be suspended for up to five school days only if the school administration, in consultation with a school psychologist or other mental health professional, determines that there is an imminent threat of serious harm to other students or HCPSS employees that cannot be reduced or eliminated through interventions and supports.

Corporal Punishment – HCPSS 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.

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



Policies can be viewed in their entirety at www.hcpss.org/board/policies/ or requested from the Policy Office at 410-313-8954.

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Offense	Definition	Range
Absent from Class without Permission	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. Missing class for more than 35 minutes of a 90-minute class will also be treated as an absence for that class. (Policy 9010)	Levels 1-3
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.** (Policy 8120).	Levels 1-5
Alcohol Violation	Possession or use of any alcoholic substance, including constructive possession and possession with intent to sell, deliver or distribute. (Policy 1050) **	Levels 3-5
Arson/Fire Violation	Attempting to, aiding in, or setting fire to (or in) a school building or to other school property. ** (Policy 1040)	Levels 3-5
Assault and/or Battery on Staff (includes threat against and/or physical attack on an HCPSS employee)	Assault – Any attempt or threat to inflict harm upon another person that gives the victim a reasonable fear of physical harm. An assault may be communicated in a behavioral, oral, written, or electronic manner. Assault includes sexual assault which is unwanted sexual contact or threat. Battery – The touching of another person by the aggressor or by some substance or force put in motion by the aggressor, which is not consented to by the other person and results in a reasonable feeling of apprehension or discomfort; may be accompanied by circumstances which reflect the student's blatant disregard for the safety of employees 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. (9270)	Levels 3-5
Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment and Intimidation	Bullying – Unwanted, demeaning behavior among students or employees that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or is highly likely to be repeated, over time. To be considered bullying, the behavior must be intentional and include: 1) an imbalance of power (students who bully use their physical, emotional, social, or academic power to control, exclude, or harm others), and 2) repetition (bullying behaviors happen more than once or are highly likely to be repeated based on evidence gathered). Cyberbullying – Bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through texting, apps, or online via social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or hurtful content about another person. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Harassment – Includes actual or perceived negative actions that offend, ridicule, or demean another person with regard to race, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, family/parental or marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, physical or mental ability, disability, or political opinion. Intimidation – Any communication or action directed against another person that threatens or induces a sense of fear and/or inferiority. Retaliation may be considered a form of intimidation. (Policy 1060)	Levels 1-5
Destruction of Property/Vandalism	Causing accidental or intentional damage, destruction or defacement (including graffiti) to school/other's property. ** (9200)	Levels 1-5
Discrimination	Any act or omission due to an individual's status or perceived status in a protected class that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment; or substantially interferes with an individual's ability to work, learn, or otherwise is sufficiently serious to limit an individual's employment opportunities, or to limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the educational program. (Policy 1010)	Levels 2-5
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. (9020)	Levels 1-3
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.) (Policy 1040)	Levels 1-4
Dress Code Violation	Wearing attire, including wearable technology 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)	Levels 1-2
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 1050) **	Levels 2-5
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) **	Levels 1-5

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Offense	Definition			Range
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. (Policy 8080)			Levels 1–4
Explosives	Possession, sale, distribution, detonation or threat of detonation of an incendiary or explosive material or device.** (Policy 9250)			Levels 3–5
Extortion	The process of obtaining property from another, with or without that person's consent, by wrongful use of force, fears or threat. ** (Policy 1040)			Levels 2–5
Failure to Serve Assigned Consequences	Failure to serve detention, suspension or other assigned consequences. ** (Policy 9200)			Levels 2–4
False Alarms/ Threats	Initiating a warning of a fire or other catastrophe without valid cause, or discharging a fire extinguisher without cause or making a bomb threat or threatening a school. ** (Policy 1040, Policy 9200)			Levels 3–5
Fighting	A hostile confrontation with physical contact involving two or more persons. (Policy 1040, Policy 9200)			Levels 1–5
Gambling	Wagering money or property. (Policy 1040, Policy 9200)			Levels 1–4
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) **			Levels 2–5
Indecent Exposure	Exposure of the private parts of the body in a lewd or indecent manner. (Policy 1020, Policy 1040)			Levels 2–4
Leaving School Grounds Without Permission	Leaving school grounds during regular school hours without written or verbal permission from a parent or another emergency contact. ** (Policy 9200)			Levels 3–5
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. ** (Policy 1040, Policy 9200)			Levels 3–5
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)			Levels 3–5
Sexual Activity	Behavior of a sexual nature including public displays, consensual sexual activity, possession of pornographic materials. ** (Policy 1020, Policy 9200)			Levels 2–5
Sexual Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct	Discriminatory and/or unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature including but not limited to sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. Sexual misconduct can be committed by a person of any gender identity and it can occur between people of the same or different gender, gender identity, or gender expression. (Policy 1020) **			Levels 2–5
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. (Policy 1040)			Levels 4–5
Tardiness	Reporting late to school or class when the day/period begins. Missing class for more than 20 minutes equals one class absence. Extended tardiness may be counted as a partial or full day absence from school. (Policy 9010)			Levels 1–3
Theft	Taking or obtaining the property of another without permission or knowledge of the owner. (Policy 1040, Policy 9200)			Levels 1–4
Threat to Students	Threatening language (verbal or written/electronic; implicit or explicit) or physical gestures directed toward another student or group of students.** (Policy 1040)			Levels 1–5
Tobacco Violation	Possession or use, or sale, of any tobacco or tobacco products, cigarette rolling papers, nicotine dispensing devices or electronic cigarette products. (Policy 1050)			Levels 3–5
Trespassing Violation	Entrance onto school property or participation in a school-sponsored event by an individual who is not identified as an authorized user of the property, and who has been given prior legal notice that entry onto or use of the property has been denied or who remains on the property once notified of the request to leave. (Policy 3020)			Levels 3–5
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)			Levels 1–3
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) **			Levels 3–5

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