

**I. Policy Statement**

The Board of Education of Howard County is committed to providing a safe, engaging, and supportive school climate. The Board believes that fostering a school climate in which individuals are valued, and their safety and rights are protected, is essential to its mission.

All students, employees, parents, and third parties of the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) share responsibility for the health, safety, and general welfare of students and for establishing and sustaining a safe and supportive school climate. Employees bear a professional responsibility to monitor student behavior and respond accordingly to both observed and reported violations of policy.

**II. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to prohibit any behaviors that interfere with a safe, engaging, and supportive school climate.

**III. Definitions**

Within the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- A. HCPSS Student Code of Conduct – A disciplinary framework that is designed to support a safe, positive, and respectful learning environment and discipline procedures for effective learning.
- B. Parent – Any one of the following, recognized as the adult(s) legally responsible for the student:
  - 1. Biological Parent – A natural parent whose parental rights have not been terminated.
  - 2. Adoptive Parent – A person who has legally adopted the student and whose parental rights have not been terminated.
  - 3. Custodian – A person or an agency appointed by the court as the legal custodian of the student and granted parental rights and responsibilities.
  - 4. Guardian – A person who has been placed by the court in charge of the affairs of the student and granted parental rights and responsibilities.

5. Caregiver – An adult resident of Howard County who exercises care, custody, or control over the student but who is neither the biological parent nor legal guardian, as long as the person satisfies the requirements of the Education Article, §7-101(c) (Informal Kinship Care).
  6. Foster Parent – An adult approved to care for a child who has been placed in the home by a state agency or a licensed child placement agency as provided by the Family Law Article, §5-507.
- C. School Climate – The prevailing attitudes, standards, or environmental conditions within a school. Reflects shared responsibility for the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures of a collaborative school community.
  - D. School Property – Any property owned or leased by the HCPSS or used by HCPSS for school-related activities. The concept of property extends to school activities such as field trips, use of parks and recreation facilities, proms at hotels, etc. Bus stops and facilities scheduled by the school system for student use are considered an extension of school property.
  - E. School-Related Activity – Any school system activity, whether held on or off school property, in which a student directly participates (e.g., school field trip, athletic event, or class/graduation activity), or in which the student does not directly participate but represents the school or student body simply by being there (e.g., spectator at a school event).
  - F. Supportive – Providing encouragement and social and emotional assistance.
  - G. Third Party – Parents, mentors, volunteers, vendors, contractors, and others with whom students or employees interact during school or school-related activities.

#### **IV. Standards**

- A. All students, employees, parents, and third parties of the HCPSS will contribute to the development and implementation of a safe, engaging, and supportive school climate.
- B. The Board will review and approve the HCPSS Student Code of Conduct annually.
- C. Behaviors identified in the HCPSS Student Code of Conduct and other related policies, will be communicated to all students, employees, parents, and third parties annually.
- D. Any behaviors that interfere with or threaten the physical, emotional, mental, or academic well-being of students or employees will be addressed through the application of the appropriate Board policy and the HCPSS Student Code of Conduct.

**V. Responsibilities**

- A. The Superintendent/Designee will ensure that students, employees, parents, and third parties are notified of the provisions of this policy annually.
- B. The Superintendent/Designee or School-based administrator will take action in response to a violation of this policy in accordance with Policy 9200 Student Discipline, the HCPSS Student Code of Conduct, the Threat Management Process, Policy 7030 Employee Conduct and Discipline, and any other applicable policies.
- C. Principals are responsible for disseminating information on the standards and penalties of this policy at their schools annually.
- D. All students, employees, parents, and third parties are responsible for maintaining a safe and supportive school climate.

**VI. Delegation of Authority**

The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures for the implementation of this policy.

**VII. References**

- A. Legal
  - Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U. S. C., Sec. 1681
  - Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U. S. C., Sec 601 and Sec. 2000e.2
  - The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 7-304.1 (Positive Behavioral Supports and Interventions).
  - The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 7-305 (Suspensions and Expulsions).
  - The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 7-424 (Reporting Incidents of Harassment Against Students).
  - The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 7-424.1 (Model Policy Prohibiting Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation).
  - The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 7-424.3 (Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation Policy).
  - COMAR 13A.01.04.03, School Safety
  - COMAR13A.08.01.11, Disciplinary Action
  - COMAR 13A.08.04.03, Student Behavior Interventions
- B. Other Board Policies
  - Policy 1000 Civility
  - Policy 1010 Discrimination
  - Policy 1020 Sexual Harassment
  - Policy 1030 Child Abuse and Neglect
  - Policy 1050 Tobacco-Free Environment
  - Policy 1060 Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, or Intimidation

Policy 2070 Ethics  
Policy 3010 Emergency Preparedness and Response  
Policy 3020 Trespassing or Willful Disturbance  
Policy 5200 Pupil Transportation  
Policy 7030 Employee Conduct and Discipline  
Policy 7040 Alcohol and Noncontrolled Substance Abuse by Employees  
Policy 7050 Drug Use by Employees: Illegal Drugs, Drug Paraphernalia and  
Controlled Substances  
Policy 9020 Students' Rights and Responsibilities  
Policy 9030 Student Publications and Productions  
Policy 9090 Wellness Through Nutrition and Physical Activity  
Policy 9200 Student Discipline  
Policy 9210 Student Dress Code  
Policy 9230 Alcohol, Other Drugs, Prescription Medication and Over-the-Counter  
Products  
Policy 9240 Student Use and Possession of Tobacco Products  
Policy 9250 Weapons  
Policy 9260 Student Search and Seizure  
Policy 9270 Student Assault and/or Battery on Staff  
Policy 9280 Students Charged With Community or Reportable Offenses  
Policy 9290 Gangs, Gang Activity, and Similar Destructive or Delinquent Group  
Behavior

- C. Relevant Data Sources  
Threat Management Process
- D. Other  
HCPSS Student Code of Conduct

### **VIII. History**

ADOPTED: October 22, 1992  
REVIEWED:  
MODIFIED: November 3, 2011  
REVISED: January 30, 2001  
April 12, 2007  
June 12, 2014  
EFFECTIVE: July 1, 2014

**I. Announcement/Dissemination of Information**

- A. Written notice of behaviors that interfere with a safe and supportive school climate, including but not limited to those identified in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) Student Code of Conduct and other related policies, will be communicated to all students, employees, parents, and third parties at the beginning of each school year and, upon registration, to new students and their parents.
- B. At least annually, the principal or appropriate supervisor will notify students, employees, parents, and third parties of the general provisions of this policy. Notification may be:
  - 1. Given via announcement over the school public address system as deemed appropriate by the principal.
  - 2. Published in newsletters, on the school/system websites, and/or in student/employee handbooks.
  - 3. Posted on bulletin boards in offices and other commonly used areas.

**II. Violations of Policy**

A. Student Violations

Any individual who believes that a student has violated this policy will immediately report the suspected violation to the school-based administrator or supervisor and comply with any additional reporting requirements that may involve criminal or other legal action.

- 1. A student who is suspected of violating this policy on school property, at school-related events, or in such a manner that creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student's or employee's educational benefits, opportunities, performance, or physical or psychological well-being, will be referred to a school-based administrator.
- 2. The school-based administrator will promptly conduct an investigation of the alleged violation and take appropriate action to address the behavior as quickly as possible in accordance with the HCPSS Student Code of Conduct.

3. If the investigation reveals that a violation has occurred, the school-based administrator will notify the student's parents and take appropriate action.
4. A student who violates this policy may be provided with interventions designed to increase the student's understanding of the impact of the offense on the victim(s).
5. A student who violates this policy may also be subject to criminal or other legal action.
6. Any student who has been the object of or who has been affected by conduct prohibited in this policy will be offered appropriate assistance by the school-based administrator or the Superintendent/Designee.

**B. Employee and Third Party Violations**

Any individual who believes that an employee or third party has violated this policy will first consider whether the behavior constitutes a violation of Policy 1030 Child Abuse and Neglect, Policy 1010 Discrimination, or Policy 1020 Sexual Harassment. Violations of those policies must be reported, investigated, and followed through in accordance with those policies and other applicable disciplinary procedures.

When the provisions of these policies do not take precedence, the following procedures will be followed:

1. An employee or third party suspected of violating this policy will be referred to an appropriate supervisor or the Superintendent/Designee.
2. The supervisor or Superintendent/Designee will promptly conduct an investigation and address the behavior as quickly as possible.
3. If the investigation reveals that a violation has occurred, the supervisor or Superintendent/Designee will take appropriate action. Disciplinary action against an employee will be taken in accordance with Policy 7030 Employee Conduct and Discipline. Action against a third party will be taken in accordance with relevant school system policies and other applicable local, state, and federal laws.

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