

## **SYSTEM-WIDE STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

Ethical and responsible student behavior is an essential part of the educational mission of our schools. To that end, the Board has developed this System-Wide Code of Conduct with input from school staff, students, parents and the community. The Code defines our expectations for student behavior and provides the framework for a safe, orderly, and respectful learning environment.

### **I. STANDARDS FOR ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR**

The Code of Conduct is intended to support and encourage students to meet the following statewide standards for ethical and responsible behavior:

- Respect
- Honesty
- Compassion
- Fairness
- Responsibility
- Courage

### **II. CODE OF CONDUCT**

All students are expected to comply with the Code of Conduct and all related Board policies and school rules. The Code applies to students:

- On school property,
- While in attendance at school or at any school-sponsored activity, or
- At any time or place that such conduct directly interferes with the operations, discipline, or general welfare of the school.

### **III. GENERAL BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS AND DISCIPLINE POLICIES**

The following expectations for student behavior are fundamental to a safe, orderly, and respectful environment in our schools. Each student should:

- A. Be courteous to fellow students, staff, and visitors.
- B. Respect the rights and privileges of other students and school staff.
- C. Obey all Board policies and school rules governing student conduct.

- D. Follow directions from school staff.
- E. Cooperate with staff in maintaining school safety, order, and discipline.
- F. Attend school regularly.
- G. Follow school rules for grooming and dress.
- H. Respect the property of others, including school property and facilities.
- I. Refrain from cheating or plagiarizing the work of others.
- J. Refrain from vulgarity, profanity, obscenity, lewdness, and indecency.

Violations of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action. Disciplinary consequences depend upon the seriousness of the violation and the student's prior disciplinary record. Consequences will range from a verbal warning for minor misconduct up to and including expulsion for the most serious offenses. Behavior that also violates the law may be referred to law enforcement authorities.

#### IV. EXPECTATIONS

The following is a summary of the school unit's expectations for student behavior. In many cases, the Board has adopted policies that address these expectations in greater detail. Students, parents, and others should refer to the policies and student handbooks for more information about the expectations and consequences. In case of an inconsistency between the Code of Conduct, Board policies and/or school handbooks, Board policies will prevail.

##### A. Violence and Threats

Students shall not engage in violent or threatening behavior. Prohibited behavior includes fighting, assault and/or battery, taking hostages, threats to commit violence against persons or property, or threats, intimidation, or harassment. Violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

##### B. Weapons

Students shall not possess or use weapons of any kind (examples include but are not limited to firearms, explosives, and knives). Students also shall

not use any object, although not necessarily designed to be a weapon, to inflict bodily harm and/or to threaten, intimidate, coerce or harass another person (examples include but are not limited to bats, lighters, tools, and toy weapons).

Firearms violations will result in expulsion in accordance with state and federal statutes; other weapons violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

C. Hazing

Hazing is prohibited. Maine law defines injurious hazing as “any action or situation, including harassing behavior, that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health of any school personnel or a student enrolled in a public school.” No student shall plan, encourage, or engage in such activities in connection with any school program or activity, including extracurricular, co-curricular, and athletic activities. Students who engage in hazing activities are subject to suspension, expulsion, and /or other appropriate disciplinary measures.

D. Discrimination and Harassment/Sexual Harassment

Students should not discriminate against other students on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, ancestry, national origin, or disability. Nor should students harass one another on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, ancestry or national origin, or disability. Sexual harassment is also prohibited. Harassment is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

E. Drug and Alcohol Use

Students shall not distribute, possess, use, or be under the influence of any alcoholic beverage, drug, or look-alike substance as described in Board policy. Violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from school.

F. Tobacco Use

Students shall not smoke, use, possess, sell, or distribute any tobacco products. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension from school.

G. Conduct on School Buses

Students must comply with all Board policies and school rules while on school buses. Students who violate these policies and rules on a school bus may have their riding privileges suspended or revoked, and may also be subject to additional disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, depending upon the particular violation.

H. Computer/Internet Use

Students may use school computers, networks, and Internet services only for educational purposes. Students shall comply with all policies and rules governing acceptable use. Unacceptable use may result in suspension or cancellation of computer privileges as well as additional disciplinary and/or legal action.

I. Co-Curricular Code of Conduct

Students must follow all Board policies and school rules while participating in athletics and extracurricular activities. In addition, a separate Code of Conduct has been developed governing the behavior of students participating in these activities. Students who violate the Co-Curricular Code of Conduct may be subject to suspension or removal from the team/activity as well as additional disciplinary action under applicable Board policies and/or school rules.

V. REMOVAL OF DISRUPTIVE, VIOLENT, OR THREATENING STUDENTS

- A. Students who are disruptive, violent, or threatening death or bodily harm to others may be removed from classrooms, school buses, or other school property when necessary to maintain order and safety. The staff member who orders the student removed should arrange to have the student escorted to the office or other designated location.
- B. If a student does not comply with a staff member's order to leave, the staff member will contact an administrator, or, if not available, another suitable person, who shall respond promptly.
- C. Staff members should not use force or restraint, except only to the minimum extent necessary to protect any person from imminent physical harm. Staff members are not required to take action that puts them at risk of serious injury.

- D. The responding administrator will take appropriate action. If the student fails to obey verbal directions, force or restraint may be used only to the minimum extent necessary to protect any person from imminent physical harm or to quell a disturbance. Whenever practicable, law enforcement should be called to restrain or physically remove the non-compliant student. The administrator may invoke the school unit's crisis response plan if appropriate.

## VI. SPECIAL SERVICES

### A. Referral

The school unit has adopted policies and procedures for determining when a student shall be referred for special services.

### B. Review of Individual Educational Plan (IEP)

The school shall schedule a Pupil Evaluation Team (PET) meeting to review the IEP of a student who has been removed from class when:

1. School officials and/or the parents believe the student may present a substantial likelihood of injury to him/herself or others;
2. The class removals are sufficient to constitute a change in the student's special education program; or
3. School officials or the parent believes that the student's behavior may warrant a change in educational programming.

### C. Time Out Rooms and Therapeutic Restraint

The school unit also has established a policy on the use of time out rooms and therapeutic restraints as required by Maine statute (Old Town Regional Program only).

## VII. REFERRALS TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES

The Superintendent and administrators have the authority to seek the assistance of law enforcement authorities when there is a substantial threat to the safety of the schools, students, or staff. The Superintendent/administration may also inform law enforcement authorities when they have reason to suspect that a student or staff

member may have violated a local, state, or federal statute. All serious offenses, as determined by the Superintendent, must be reported to law enforcement authorities.

### VIII. DISSEMINATION OF SYSTEM-WIDE STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The System-Wide Student Code of Conduct shall be distributed to staff, students, and parents through handbooks and/or other means selected by the Superintendent and building administrators.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA §§ 254 (11); 1001 (15)

Cross Reference: AC - Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action  
ACAA - Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students  
ACAD - Hazing  
ADC - Tobacco Use and Possession  
EBCA - Emergency Management Plan  
EBCC - Bomb Threats  
IHBAA - Referral/Pre-Referral of Students with Disabilities  
IHBAC - Child Find  
IJNDB - Student Computer and Internet Use  
JICH - Drug and Alcohol Use by Students  
JICIA - Weapons, Violence and School Safety  
JIH - Questioning and Searches of Students  
JJIC - Athletic and Extracurricular Activities Code  
JK - Student Discipline  
JKD - Suspension of Students  
JKE - Expulsion of Students  
JKF - Disciplinary Removal of Students with Disabilities  
JKG - Physical Restraint of Students  
JKGA - Time Out Rooms and Therapeutic Restraint  
KLG - Relations with Law Enforcement Authorities  
Taking Responsibility: Standards for Ethical and Responsible Behavior in Maine Schools and Communities (Report of The Commission for Ethical and Responsible Behavior, February 2001)

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