

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.

Article 1 - Standards for Ethical and Responsible Behavior

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

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

Article 2 - 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.

Article 3 - 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:

1. Be courteous to fellow students, staff and visitors.
2. Respect the rights and privileges of other students and school staff.
3. Obey all Board policies and school rules governing student conduct.
4. Follow directions from school staff.
5. Cooperate with staff in maintaining school safety, order and discipline.
6. Attend school regularly.
7. Meet school standards for grooming and dress.
8. Respect the property of others, including school property and facilities.
9. Refrain from cheating or plagiarizing the work of others.
10. 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

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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.

See policies:

JK – Student Discipline

JKD – Student Detention/Suspension

JKE – Expulsion of Students

Article 4 - 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.

See policies:

JICIA – Weapons, Violence, Bullying and School Safety

EBCC – Bomb Threats

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.

See policy JICIA – Weapons, Violence, Bullying and School Safety

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.

See policy ACAD – Hazing

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, sexual orientation, religion, ancestry, or national origin or disability. Sexual harassment is also prohibited. Harassment is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

See policies:

*AC – Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action
ACAA – Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students*

E. Bullying

Students shall not engage in bullying behavior, including unwanted physical contact, acts or communications of any kind that: (1) damage a student's property; place a student in reasonable fear of physical harm and/or damage to his/her property; and/or disrupt the instructional program or the orderly operation of the school; and/or (2) creates a hostile educational environment for the student who is bullied. Violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from school.

See policies:

JICIA – Weapons, Violence, Bullying and School Safety

G. 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.

See policy JICH – Drug and Alcohol Use by Students – Student Substance Abuse Discipline

H. 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.

See policy ADC – Tobacco Use and Possession

I. 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.

See policies:

*EEACC - Student Conduct on School Buses
EEACC – R – Student Conduct – Rules of Behavior*

J. 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.

See policy IJNDB – Student Computer and Internet Use

Article 5 - Removal of Disruptive/Violent/Threatening Students

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.

*See 20-A M.R.S.A. § 4009 – Protection from Liability
See Crisis Response Plan*

Article 6 - Special Services

1. **Referral.** The School Unit has adopted policies and procedures for determining when a student shall be referred for special services.

*See policies:
IHBAA – Referral/Pre-Referral of Students with Disabilities
IHBAC – Child Find Policy*

2. **Review of Individual Educational Plan.** The school shall schedule a PET meeting to review the IEP of a student who has been removed from class when: (a) school officials and/or the parent believe the student may present a substantial likelihood of injury to himself/herself or others; (b) the class removals are sufficient to constitute a change in the student's special education program; or (c) school officials or the parent believe that the student's behavior may warrant a change in educational programming.

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See policy JKF – Disciplinary Removals of Students with Disabilities

3. **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.

See policy JKGA – Time Out Rooms and Therapeutic Restraint

Article 7 - 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.

See policy KLG – Relations with Law Enforcement Authorities

Article 8 - 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 M.R.S.A. §§ 254 (11); 1001 (15)

Cross Reference: *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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Policies/RSU No. 18 Policies/J – Students/JIC – Student Code of Conduct