

STUDENT CONDUCT

I. **AFFILIATED DOCUMENT: ACPS STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

<https://www.acps.k12.va.us/codeofconduct>

II. **GENERALLY**

Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) is committed to a positive, respectful, inclusive climate throughout the Division that promotes academic achievement, ensures a safe and welcoming learning environment, provides Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), ensures equitable outcomes in administrative responses to student behavior, and maximizes the time students spend in the classroom.

Recognizing that student conduct and discipline are closely related to student achievement, the School Board supports standards of conduct and discipline practices that:

- Are well researched and result in safer schools grounded in equity, improved student achievement, improved student attendance, and increased student accountability;
- Provide consistency, fairness, and equitable interventions and consequences across all schools in the Division;
- Eliminate disparities in applying discipline by assuring equitable interventions and consequences across all racial and ethnic groups, by gender, among those with disabilities and other protected classes;
- Define and communicate expectations for student behavior;
- Define and communicate expectations for staff responsibilities related to student conduct and discipline;
- Balance the needs of the student, the needs of those directly affected by a student's behavior, and the needs of the overall school community;
- Engage parents/guardians early in the disciplinary process; and
- Facilitate students, staff, parents/guardians and the community working together to provide both academic and non-academic support to students.

III. **PROMOTING POSITIVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

School culture and climate have a profound impact on students' academic progress and their relationships with peers and adults. Each ACPS school is expected to promote a positive school culture that provides students with a supportive environment in which to grow both socially and academically.

The manner in which students conduct themselves in ACPS is a major factor in establishing and maintaining a safe and respectful school community. To promote positive student behavior, all members of the school community, students, staff, and parents/guardians must know and understand, the standards of conduct that all students

are expected to live up to, the supports and interventions that will be used to address misconduct, and the disciplinary responses if the standards of conduct are not met.

ACPS takes a proactive role in nurturing positive student behavior. Social-emotional learning (SEL) must be a basic component of each school's program of universal prevention for all students. Effective social-emotional learning helps students develop fundamental life skills, including:

- Recognizing and managing emotions;
- Developing caring and concern for others;
- Establishing positive relationships;
- Making responsible decisions; and
- Handling challenging situations constructively and ethically.

When students develop these skills, they experience more positive relationships with peers, engage in more productive social behaviors, and are less likely to engage in misconduct.

IV. MTSS FRAMEWORK

Utilizing a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is essential to ensuring that the right supports are in place and that schools are implementing progressive discipline. MTSS is a comprehensive system that screens all students and provides targeted interventions, as needed. The goal of these supports is to foster resiliency and the pro-social skills that students need to succeed in the classroom and beyond.

ACPS staff members are also responsible for addressing inappropriate student behaviors that disrupt learning. Administrators, teachers, counselors, and other school staff are expected to engage all students in intervention and prevention strategies that address a student's behavior and discuss these strategies with the student and their parents/guardians.

V. APPLICATION OF POLICY

The ACPS Student Code of Conduct and this policy establish expectations and standards for student conduct and a list of possible actions for violations of those standards, which apply to all ACPS students. In accordance with the Code of Virginia, they are enforced when the student's conduct occurs and the student is

- On school property;
- Traveling to school or from school;
- Traveling to, at, and from bus stops;
- In School Board vehicles;
- In attendance at any school-sponsored activity; or
- Off school property if the conduct, *including online conduct*, substantially disrupts the learning environment.

The School Board and Superintendent biennially review the Virginia Board of Education (VBOE) Model Code of Student Conduct to incorporate (into this policy and the ACPS Student Code of Conduct), *a range of discipline options and alternatives* to preserve a safe and non-disruptive environment for effective learning and teaching.

VI. LEVELED SYSTEM OF DISCIPLINARY RESPONSES AND INSTRUCTIONAL INTERVENTIONS

The Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE's) Student Behavior and Administrative Response (SBAR) system of student behavior categories is designed to recognize the impact student behavior has on the school environment and form a framework for identifying behaviors that may negatively impact that environment. They encourage awareness of students' social-emotional development, emphasize the importance of understanding the effect of behavior, and point the way for developing a plan for improving behavior. The categories are a way to group behaviors in order to apply appropriate, leveled administrative interventions and disciplinary responses to each kind of student behavior. The categories, which are thoroughly reviewed in the ACPS Student Code of Conduct, are:

- **Behaviors that Impede Academic Progress (BAP):** These behaviors impede academic progress of the student or of students. They are typically indicative of the student's lack of self-management or self-awareness. Sometimes, the student may need help in understanding how the behavior impacts others so training in social awareness may also be indicated.
- **Behaviors Related to School Operations (BSO):** These behaviors interfere with the daily operation of school procedures. Students exhibiting these behaviors may need to develop self-management, self-awareness, or social awareness skills.
- **Relationship Behaviors (RB):** These behaviors create a negative relationship between two or more people that does not result in physical harm. Relationship behaviors affect the whole school community in that the school climate is often a reflection of how people treat one another. Students who exhibit difficulty with relationship behaviors may also have difficulty with the other social-emotional competencies.
- **Behaviors that Present a Safety Concern (BSC):** These behaviors create unsafe conditions for students, staff, and visitors to the school. The underlying reasons for this type of behavior may lie in any of the social-emotional competencies so the administrator should investigate the underlying motivation for the student's behavior. Training in social awareness and decision-making are usually indicated in any behavior that creates a safety concern.

- **Behaviors that Endanger Self or Others (BESO):** These behaviors endanger the health, safety, or welfare of either the student or others in the school community. Behaviors that rise to this level of severity are often complex. While they are indicative of poor decision-making skills, students who exhibit these behaviors may also have developmental needs in the other social-emotional competencies.
- **Persistently Dangerous Behaviors (PDB):** These behaviors indicate that the student is in need of interventions and supports. ACPS works with other child-serving agencies to coordinate services for these students.

In alignment with the SBAR system, disciplinary responses to misconduct should start at the lowest possible level reasonably calculated to change the student's behavior and to minimize the loss of instructional time. Although suspension and expulsion of students is authorized in accordance with Policy JGD/JGE: *Student Suspension/Expulsion*, exclusionary discipline practices should be the action of last resort unless there is extreme disruption of the educational process or behavior that poses a danger to persons or property.

Each school principal has the responsibility and authority to exercise reasonable judgment in enforcing this policy and the Student Code of Conduct. Principals are responsible for ensuring that all students, staff members, and parents/guardians are provided the opportunity to become familiar with this policy and the Student Code of Conduct at the beginning of each school year.

VII. PARENT/GUARDIAN AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Each parent/guardian of a student enrolled in ACPS has a duty to assist in enforcing this policy, the Student Code of Conduct and compulsory school attendance laws (Va. Code § 22.1-279.3), in order that education may be conducted in an atmosphere free from disruption and threat to persons or property, and one that is supportive of individual rights. Therefore, this policy, the Student Code of Conduct, a notice of the requirements of Va. Code § 22.1-279.3, and a copy of the compulsory school attendance law, is sent to all parents/guardians within one calendar month of the opening of schools simultaneously with any other materials customarily distributed at that time. A statement for the signature of the parent/guardian acknowledging the receipt of this policy, the Student Code of Conduct, the requirements of Va. Code § 22.1-279.3, and the compulsory school attendance law is also sent. The statement also acknowledges the receipt of state law concerning parent/guardian assistance in maintaining discipline and order. Parents/guardians are notified that by signing the statement of receipt, they are not deemed to waive, but expressly reserve, their rights protected by the constitution or laws of the United States or Virginia. Each school maintains records of the signed statements.

The school principal may request the student's parent/guardian (or parents/guardians, if both have legal and physical custody), to meet with the principal or designee to review

this policy, the Student Code of Conduct and the parent's/guardian's (or parents'/guardians') responsibility to participate with the school in disciplining the student and maintaining order, to ensure the student's compliance with compulsory school attendance law and to discuss improvement of the child's behavior, school attendance and educational progress.

ACPS publishes the Student Code of Conduct described above and the notice required under Section 22.1-279.3 of the Code of Virginia annually. This publication also contains the attendance regulations, bus regulations, information on search and seizure, the procedure for suspension and expulsion, and all required notifications including Title IX Non-Discrimination and a Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) notice. All employees who are in contact with students receive a copy of the Student Code of Conduct.

VIII. NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND FAMILIES

The school principal or designee may notify the parents/guardians of any student who violates a School Board policy, the Student Code of Conduct, or the compulsory attendance requirements when such violation could result in the student's suspension or the filing of a court petition, whether or not the school administration has imposed such disciplinary action or filed such petition. The notice states (1) the date and particulars of the violation; (2) the obligation of the parent/guardian to take actions to assist the school in improving the student's behavior and ensuring compliance with compulsory school attendance; and (3) that, if the student is suspended, the parent/guardian may be required to accompany the student to meet with school officials; and (4) that a petition with the juvenile and domestic relations court may be filed under certain circumstances to declare the student a child in need of supervision.

The principal or designee notifies the parent/guardian of any student involved in an incident required to be reported to the Superintendent and the Virginia Board of Education (VBOE) as described in Policy CLA: *Reporting Acts of Violence and Substance Abuse*.

If a parent/guardian fails to comply with the requirements of this policy, the School Board may ask the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court to proceed against the parent/guardian in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Virginia.

A parent, guardian or other person having control or charge of a student is notified in writing of any disciplinary action taken with regard to any incident upon which an adjudication of delinquency or conviction for an offense listed in Va. Code § 16.1-260.G was based and the reasons therefor. The parent or guardian is also notified of the parent's/guardian's right to review, and to request an amendment of, the student's scholastic record, in accordance with Virginia Board of Education (VBOE) regulations governing the management of scholastic records.

IX. PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND TREATMENT ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

Any student involved in a reportable drug or violent incident, as described in Policy CLA: *Reporting Acts of Violence or Substance Abuse*, participates in prevention and intervention activities deemed appropriate by the Superintendent or designee. prevention plan.

To support students with appropriate interventions, ALL students who violate Policy JFCF/JFCI: Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) in Schools will be eligible for referral to Substance Abuse (SA) services.

In alignment with Va. Code § 22.1-277.2:1, ACPS requires any student involved in Code of Conduct violations related to alcohol or drug use or distribution to be referred to SA Services for evaluation and/or assessment for drug or alcohol abuse or both. If recommended by the SA Counselor (SAC) and with the consent of the student's parent/guardian, the student may be referred to participate in a community-based treatment program.

X. PROHIBITED CONDUCT

In accordance with the Code of Virginia, the following conduct is prohibited. Students engaging in such conduct are subject to disciplinary responses in alignment with the SBAR system.

Bullying and Use of Electronic Means for Bullying (Cyberbullying)

Bullying is prohibited. "**Bullying**" means any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. "Bullying" includes cyber bullying. "Bullying" does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument or peer conflict.

Gang Activity

Gang activity, as defined in Policy JFCE: *Gang Activity or Association*, is prohibited.

Harassment

As provided in Policy JFHA/GBA: *Prohibition Against Harassment, Bullying, Hostile Work Environment and Retaliation*, students are prohibited from harassing other students, school staff, volunteers, student teachers or any other person present in school facilities or at school functions.

Hazing

Hazing is prohibited.

Hazing means to recklessly or intentionally endanger the health or safety of a student or students or to inflict bodily harm on a student or students in connection with or for the purpose of initiation, admission into or affiliation with or as a condition for continued membership in a club, organization, association, fraternity, sorority, or student body regardless of whether the student or students so endangered or injured participated voluntarily in the relevant activity.

Intentional Injury of Others

Students are prohibited from intentionally injuring others.

Self-defense

Whether a student acted in self-defense is considered when the student's conduct is evaluated for disciplinary action.

Threats: Intimidation

Students are prohibited from making any verbal, written or physical threat of bodily injury to another person.

Trespassing

Students, including students who have been suspended or expelled, are subject to disciplinary action for trespassing on school property

Use and/or Possession of Alcohol, Tobacco Products, Nicotine Vapor Products, Anabolic Steroids, and Other Drugs

Students are prohibited from possessing, using, or distributing any of the restricted substances listed below on school property, on school buses or during school activities, on or off school property.

Students are prohibited from attempting to possess, use, consume, procure and/or purchase, any of the restricted substances listed below or what is represented by or to the student to be any of the restricted substances listed below or what the student believes is any of the restricted substances listed below.

Students are prohibited from being under the influence of any of the restricted substances listed below, regardless of whether the student's condition amounts to legal intoxication.

Restricted substances include but are not limited to alcohol, tobacco products as defined in Policy JFCH: *Tobacco Products and Nicotine Vapor Products*, nicotine vapor products as defined in Policy JFCH, inhalant products, and other controlled substances defined in the Drug Control Act, Chapter 15.1 of Title 54 of the Code of Virginia, such as anabolic steroids, stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens, marijuana, imitation and look-alike drugs, drug paraphernalia and any prescription or non-prescription drug possessed in violation of School Board policy.

In addition to any other consequences which may result, a student who is a member of a school athletic team will be ineligible for two school years to compete in interscholastic athletic competition if the school principal and the Superintendent determine that the student used anabolic steroids during the training period immediately preceding or during the sport season of the athletic team, unless such steroid was prescribed by a licensed physician for a medical condition.

Use of Profane or Obscene Language and Conduct

Students are prohibited from using profane or obscene language or engaging in profane or obscene conduct.

Vandalism

Students are prohibited from vandalizing school property and the property of any ACPS staff member or any other person.

The School Board may recover damages sustained because of the willful or malicious destruction, or damage to, public property pursuant to Policy ECAB: *Vandalism*.

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Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 16.1-260, 18.2-308, 18.2-308.7, 22.1-23.3, 22.1-78, 22.1-200.1, 22.1-253.13:7.C.3; 22.1-254, 22.1-276.3, 22.1-277, 22.1-277.08, 22.1-277.2, 22.1-279.1, 22.1-279.3, 22.1-279.3:1,

22.1-279.6.

Model Guidance for Positive and Preventive Code of Student Conduct Policy and Alternatives to Suspension, Virginia Board of Education, January 2019.

Cross Refs.:	CLA	Reporting Acts of Violence and Substance Abuse
	EBB	Threat Assessment Teams
	ECAB	Vandalism
	IIBEA/GAB	Responsible Computer System Use
	JFCF/JFCI	Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) in Schools
	JFG	Search and Seizure
	JFHA/GBA	Prohibition Against Harassment, Bullying, Hostile or Abusive Work Environment and Retaliation
	JGA	Corporal Punishment
	JGD/JGE	Student Suspension/Expulsion
	JGDA	Disciplining Students with Disabilities
	JGDB	Disciplining Students with Disabilities for Infliction of Serious Bodily Injury
	JN	Student Fees, Fines, and Charges