

PROHIBITION OF THE USE OF HATE SPEECH, ETHNICALLY OR RACIALLY INSENSITIVE EXPRESSIONS IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

I. GOVERNING POLICY: JFCB: RESPECT, ETHICS AND INTEGRITY IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

II. DEFINITION

Hate Speech – abusive or threatening speech, writing, or action that expresses prejudice against a particular group, especially on the basis of race, religion, or sexual orientation.

III. GENERALLY

This regulation reflects Virginia High School League (VHSL) Policy 27-16-1, *Use of Hate Speech, Ethnically or Racially Insensitive Expressions*, effective November 9, 2021. **However, School Board Policy JFCB and this regulation apply to all ACPS-approved extracurricular activities, and are not limited to those governed by VHSL.**

Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) is committed to providing an environment that respects every individual. In alignment with School Board Policies JB: *Nondiscrimination in Education*, and JFHA/GBA: *Prohibition Against Harassment, Bullying, Hostile Work Environment and Retaliation*, all individuals participating in or attending ACPS-approved, extracurricular activities are prohibited from using hate speech, ethnically, or racially insensitive expressions against students, athletes, coaches, staff members and officials.

Any coach, staff member, team personnel and/or participant who confronts or addresses a coach, staff member, participant or official using hate speech, ethnically or racially insensitive expressions will be disqualified from participating in the meeting or competition and will be ineligible for the team's next scheduled competition (or activity's next meeting) and/or subsequent competitions/meetings until penalties and educational/restorative interventions are completed.

Note: For the 2021-2022 school year, the disqualification for VHSL-regulated activities will be a one-game/competition suspension. VHSL may increase this to a two- or three-game/competition suspension for the 2022-23 school year. For the 2021-2022 school year, educational/restorative interventions are recommended by VHSL. Beginning July 1, 2022, educational/restorative interventions are required for any person violating this regulation.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. All ACPS-Approved Extracurricular Activities

1. For any alleged incident involving the use of hate speech, ethnically or racially insensitive expressions by an ACPS student or staff member during ACPS-approved extracurricular activities, (*including* those governed by VHSL), ACPS will investigate and administer disciplinary consequences/corrective actions in accordance with the Student (or Employee) Code of Conduct.

B. VHSL-Governed Activities

1. Notification

In addition to ACPS' administrative responses discussed above:

- ACPS will inform VHSL of any alleged incident involving the use of hate speech, ethnically or racially insensitive expressions within two working days after the school administration becomes aware of the incident.
- VHSL will send a copy of the report to the principal of each school involved.
- Within five working days of receiving the report, each principal files a response or provides information concerning the incident to VHSL.
- A VHSL committee consisting of three or four principals, athletic directors, and coaches will review the incident report and response from each school involved. Following the completion of the review, the committee will make a recommendation to the VHSL Executive Director and/or designee for action.

2. VHSL Penalties

The following terms represent VHSL consequences that will be referred to in interpreting a violation of using hate speech, ethnically or racially insensitive expression.

- **Ejection** - Any coach, team personnel and/or contestant who confronts or addresses a coach, contestant, or official using hate speech, ethnically or racially insensitive expression will be disqualified for the remainder of the contest.

- **Player/Coach Suspension** - Any coach, team personnel and/or contestant who is ejected from a contest for using hate speech or ethnically or racially insensitive expressions will be ineligible for the team's next scheduled contest. If a coach or player commits a second offense, he/she will be ineligible for the remainder of that sport/activity season.

Note: For the 2021-2022 school year, disqualification will continue as a one-game suspension. For the 2022-2023 school year, the suspension may increase to a two- or three-game suspension.

- **School Warning** - A school's program may be placed on warning status for a one-year period of time by the VHSL Sportsmanship Committee for repeated infractions of using hate speech, ethnically or racially insensitive expression.
- **School Probation** - Probation is a more severe penalty, based on repeated offenses with-in a two-year period of time by the same program or cumulative warnings over a period of time within the school. A school or program on probation may not enter any play-off toward a district, regional, or state championship nor may the school enter any sanctioned event.
- **School Suspension** – A school suspended from the VHSL may not compete in interscholastic competition of any kind with a member of the VHSL or a school that is a member of another state associated with the National Federation of State High School Associations.
- **School Fine** – A fine not to exceed \$1,000 may be levied by VHSL with or without any other penalty on a school. Failure to report violations involving the use of hate speech, ethnically or racially insensitive expression will result in a fine per occurrence.

3. VHSL Appeals

A decision may be appealed to the VHSL Sportsmanship Committee.

V. TRAINING AND NOTIFICATION TO STUDENTS, PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND COACHES

ACPS coaches and/or supervising staff members will receive training on modeling, communicating and upholding expectations for behavior related to cultural awareness, equity and good sportsmanship.

In addition, schools will hold **participant, parent/guardian and coach/supervising staff member** preseason meetings to discuss ACPS/VHSL expectations for student, parent/guardian, coach, and spectator behavior related to cultural awareness, equity and sportsmanship.

Note: For the 2021-2022 school year, preseason meetings with parents/guardians, players and coaches are recommended. For the 2022-2023 school year, preseason meetings will be required.

VI. SPECTATORS

For any spectator who uses hate speech, ethnically or racially insensitive expressions while attending *any* extracurricular activities on ACPS property:

1. First Offense – removal from the audience/school property
2. Second Offense – suspension from attending contests for a semester
3. Third Offense – suspension from attending contests for a year; issuance of a no trespassing letter.

For VHSL-governed activities, the authority and rules of the VHSL govern schools themselves, including participants and coaches. ACPS is responsible for the conduct of its spectators, except at championship events, which are conducted by the VHSL.

Established: December 16, 2021

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended, §§ 22.1-78, 22.1-208.

Virginia High School League Policy 27-16-1, *Use of Hate Speech, Ethnically or Racially Insensitive Expressions.*

Cross Refs:	IGDA	Student Organizations, Co-Curricular Programs and Extracurricular Activities
	IGDAA	Grade Average Requirement for Eligibility to Participate in Athletic and Co-Curricular Programs
	IICA	Field Trips
	IICA-R	Field Trip Procedures
	JB	Nondiscrimination in Education
	JB-R/JFHA-R	Procedures for Investigating Student Complaints of Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying (PDF)
	JFC	Student Conduct
	JFC-R	Standards of Student Conduct
	JFCB	Respect, Ethics and Integrity in Extracurricular Activities
	JFCC	Student Conduct on School Buses
	KG	Community Use of School Facilities
	KG-R	Community Use of School Facilities Regulations and Application
	KQ	Commercial, Promotional and Corporate Sponsorships and Partnerships