

Frequently Asked Questions:

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What is Carlisle Public School philosophy statement of student behavior?

The Carlisle Public School is a caring community of students and staff who work together sharing the joy of learning. It is a unique community of individuals who represent a great number of backgrounds, beliefs, attitudes, and abilities. Excellence in education is the common goal. We come together in order to prepare for the future and to learn from one another. The following guidelines have been written to create an atmosphere in which all may feel safe, included, and respected.

The Carlisle Public School subscribes to a philosophical approach that focuses on the whole child as a growing, thinking individual. The emphasis is on a process approach to teaching and learning, with the belief that the product of a successful school experience is a student who values learning and has the ability to think and make connections. As students experience a core of common knowledge and acquire fundamental skills, including the ability to analyze, draw inferences, and solve problems, they strive to become increasingly independent, responsible, and accountable. Our efforts focus on fostering satisfaction in accomplishment and on teaching students the value of collaboration, cooperation, and competition. Evaluation and grading are intended to enhance growth as students learn to deal with successes and failures and to initiate, develop, and follow through with tasks involving individual expression.

The Carlisle Public School builds opportunities to ensure the success of ALL students. School citizens are expected to show sensitivity toward human relationships and respect for abilities, values, and attitudes of others. Students are enabled to see themselves as active and responsible citizens in their class, school, community, society, and world.

It is the purpose of the Carlisle Public School to promote a sense of self as well as community. We wish to minimize conflict and promote an atmosphere in which we all feel comfortable, supported and successful. We have placed a renewed emphasis on actualizing respectful behavior throughout the school community. With this notion in mind, we ask you to spend a few minutes reviewing the Carlisle Public School's Behavioral Expectations.

We urge you to discuss with your students these expectations and ways in which they can be fulfilled. To this end, the following rights, responsibilities, and behavior code are set forth. Student responsibilities include regular school attendance, best effort in classroom work and homework, and adherence to all school rules.

Will I be informed of the consequences for a child other than my own?

Educators in the United States must obey the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records and FERPA applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

This act strongly affects schools and disciplinary procedures against minor students. One effect of this act is to make school records (including discipline) a private matter. That means a school is prohibited from sharing any information in a student's record – including disciplinary information — to third parties without parental consent. The result of this is that you cannot expect a school official to tell you how he or she has disciplined a student, even if that student directly victimized your child. School officials must obey state and federal laws, which mandate that they keep student records confidential and private.

Can school staff tell parents what consequence was received by a child who engaged in hurtful behavior, such as bullying?

Again, no. What happens to your child or any child at our school is a confidential matter and cannot be shared with any other parent. Please be assured that situations will be dealt with according to the Carlisle Public School Parent and Student Handbook. If your child continues to be hurt in any way, please contact school immediately.

What laws protect students against bullying?

Two Massachusetts laws are designed to help students and schools prevent bullying and deal with it when it happens. The Massachusetts laws are MGL c.71 § 37O which pertains to all school districts and students in the state, and MGL 71B §3 which pertains to students with disabilities who are vulnerable to bullying.

The federal laws are Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title II of the ADA, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability, sex, race, color or national origin. Sec 504 and Title II pertain to all students with disabilities, not just those who have IEP's.

Source: <https://www.masslegalservices.org/content/children%E2%80%99s-issues-series-anti-bullying-laws>

What is the Massachusetts Anti-Bullying Law?

The Massachusetts Anti-Bullying Law is a law, enacted May 3, 2010, designed to prevent bullying in schools. The law has two parts; one applies to all students and schools and one applies to students who are eligible for special education.

MGL c.71 §37O defines “bullying” very broadly, including cyber-bullying, and requires schools to do certain things to try to prevent bullying. Many people say it is one of the strongest anti-bullying laws in the country.

- Most parts of the law apply to all types of schools—public, charter and even private schools.
- Every district must have a bullying prevention and intervention plan.
- Unfortunately, it may prove to be difficult to enforce some parts of the law since it contains some broad definitions and specifically states it creates no private right of action.

MGL c. 71B sec 3 states that districts must consider how to help a student avoid bullying if they have autism or a disability that makes them vulnerable to bullying or teasing.

What is the definition of bullying under the Massachusetts law?

The law defines bullying as, the repeated use, by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression OR a physical act or gesture (or any combination) directed at a victim that causes:

- **physical or emotional harm** to the victim or damage to the victim’s property,
- places the victim in **reasonable fear** of harm to himself or of damage to his property,
- creates a **hostile environment** at school for the victim,
- **infringes on the rights** of the victim at school, OR
- materially and substantially **disrupts** the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

What is cyber-bullying?

The law defines cyber-bullying to include just about every kind of bullying through use of technology or electronic communication that can be imagined. It includes creating a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of someone else, writing messages pretending to be someone else, and posting material on an electronic medium such as Facebook. §370(a).

Does the Massachusetts Anti-Bullying law protect people who report bullying?

Yes. The law explicitly prohibits retaliation against a person who reports bullying or gives information during an investigation or “who has reliable information about bullying” (which seems to protect from retaliation even a person who says nothing). Section 5(b). The law says only that

it prohibits retaliation—it provides no other information (no procedure, no remedy, no definition, etc.).

What is the Carlisle Public Schools Anti-Bullying Statement?

It is the goal of the school to be a safe, effective learning environment, free of bullying or harassment of any kind, for all students. Bullying of any type has no place in a school setting. The Carlisle Public Schools will endeavor to maintain a learning and working environment free of bullying.

Bullying is defined as the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of the school staff including but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extra-curricular activity, or paraprofessional, of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target that does one of more of the following:

- Causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property
- Places the target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself or of damage to his/her property
- Creates a hostile environment at school for the target
- Infringes on the rights of the target at school
- Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of school

Bullying can create unnecessary and unwarranted attention and anxiety that may affect student self-esteem as well as attending school, walking in corridors, eating in cafeterias, playing in the school yard or recreation areas, participating in or attending special and extracurricular activities, or riding on the bus to and from school each day.

Every child has the right to feel safe at school. Teachers, administrators and supervisors must act to ensure that bullying in any form will not be tolerated, and will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion for students, and termination for employees.

School staff shall immediately report any instance of bullying the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or their designee. The District will investigate allegations of bullying. Teachers who observe bullying will address and document the behavior, provide consequences, and refer continuing and serious problems to the principal. The principal will immediately investigate all such complaints and provide appropriate consequences, as outlined in the Carlisle School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The Plan applies to students and members of the school staff including but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extra-curricular activity, or paraprofessional. In addition, teachers, staff, and principals will work with students to encourage them to report all incidents of bullying they observe as bystanders.

What is Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
 - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
 - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
 - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
 - Accrediting organizations;
 - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
 - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
 - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

Source: <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

In general, what are school procedures for investigating and determining consequences for student misbehavior?

In all cases, student offenses shall be treated on an individual basis, and the administration shall develop disciplinary measures appropriate for each offense. When possible, constructive tasks commensurate with the infraction shall be considered, and counseling shall be part of the disciplinary procedure when appropriate.

We understand that students will make mistakes as they grow. We expect our students to learn from their mistakes. Teachers, administrators, and school psychologists will work collaboratively to guide our students in making good choices as they are faced with daily life situations. However, when the rules are broken, consequences must follow.

Consequences *might* include:

- Student will be reminded of the expectations for behavior in our school.
- Student will complete oral or written self-reflection.
- Student will meet individually with a staff member. When appropriate, student will meet with the other party involved in a dispute to settle differences. A teacher, principal, or school psychologist will serve as mediator.
- Student will be given a time-out or miss recess.
- Student will eat lunch in the office or other assigned area.
- Student will make restitution and/or repair damage done.
- Parents will be asked to meet with administration, teacher(s), and/or school psychologist.
- Student will serve after-school detention for one or more days.
- Student will be excluded from participating in school-sponsored activities or events.
- Student will be suspended or expelled from school.

What are detentions?

Classroom detention may be assigned at the discretion of the teacher. Inappropriate behavior, missing homework, or incomplete assignments may be reasons for assigning classroom detention. Teachers will communicate the reason for a detention to the parents and student as well as state the designated day that the student will serve the detention. During the detention, the student will follow the rules designated by the teacher.

Administrative detentions may be given for disruptive and/or disrespectful behavior. Detentions from the principals will be given with one or more days' notice to parents and student. Failure to report to detention will result in further action by the administration. When serving a detention, a student is expected to work quietly in a designated space such as the Main Office or perform a school service.

What is Exclusion/Suspension?

Exclusion occurs when students are not allowed to attend non-curricular related events, while suspension occurs when students are not allowed to attend curricular activities.

Examples of Offenses leading to Suspension:

- Interfering with the rights of other students by physical action, verbal abuse, or harassment/bullying
- Physical aggression or disruptions that interfere with the educational process in the school
- Using any tobacco product including vaping/E-cigarettes in school buildings, on buses, or on school grounds
- Stealing, defacing school property, pulling fire alarms, or using fire extinguishers unnecessarily. Note that these acts are against the law and are considered to be extremely serious. Each case will be dealt with individually with possible referral to the police and/or fire department.
- Disrespecting peers and staff, being disobedient or insubordinate, or talking back to a staff member
- Using profane, obscene, or abusive language
- Having matches or lighters in school buildings, on school buses, or on school grounds

All after school and evening school sponsored activities are subject to the relevant rules and regulations stated above. Students who are suspended out of school are not allowed to participate in school activities or to be on school grounds while suspended. Students who are given in-school suspension are not allowed to participate in school activities during their suspension

What is Expulsion?

Students may be expelled from curricular activities according to school policy and state law. Examples of Expellable Offenses:

- Bringing to school, possessing, or using any alcoholic beverage, smoking material, drugs, weapons, or explosive devices including fireworks. Note that these acts are against the law and are considered to be extremely serious. Each case will be dealt with individually with possible referral to the police and/or fire department.

Can students with learning disabilities be suspended?

Yes. If suspension is proposed for a student with special needs, and the suspension totals more than ten cumulative days, manifestation procedures must be implemented: The special education team shall be convened to review the student's IEP and needs. A determination will be made as to whether the misconduct is related to the special need, or is related to a deficiency in special education services.

If the team concludes that the student's misconduct is related to the student's disability or placement in an inappropriate special education setting, the student shall not be suspended. Instead, the district completes a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention plan if it has not already done so. If a behavioral intervention plan is already in place, the TEAM reviews and modifies it, as necessary, to address the behavior.

If the team concludes that the misconduct is not related to the special needs nor is it the result of inappropriate services, the school may impose suspension to exceed ten cumulative days. However, the school will provide an alternative plan for the delivery of services. In addition, the district will offer, if appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention services and modifications, to address behavior so it does not recur. In the event that a student with special needs demonstrates instances of dangerously assaultive or self-abusive behavior, an emergency evaluation and placement may be made with parental consent or by a hearing officer. Under special circumstances the district may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting for up to 45 days.

Where can I learn more about school rules, procedures, and student discipline?

The Parent and Student Handbook for Carlisle Public Schools is available on the school website. This handbook provides additional information for students and parents regarding expected behavior and associated consequences.

This list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) is available as a PDF.