Sweet Home Central School District

Plain Language Version Code of Conduct

2023-2024

"Every Student, One Community, Ready for the Future"

Sweet Home Central School District
CODE OF CONDUCT
Plain Language Summary - 2023-24

This document is a plain language summary of the Sweet Home Central School District (SHCSD) Code of Conduct; it does not replace the complete Code of Conduct. A copy of the complete Sweet Home Code of Conduct is available on the Sweet Home website at: www.sweethomeschools.org.

The SHCSD has established a Code of Conduct that identifies:

1. Introduction
2. Definitions
3. Students Rights & Responsibilities
4. The Role of Essential Partners
5. Student Civility & Dress Code
6. Prohibited Student Conduct
7. Reporting Violations
8. Disciplinary Consequences, Procedures & Referrals
9. Alternative Instruction
10. Discipline of Students with Disabilities
11. Prohibition of Corporal Punishment
12. Student Searches & Interrogations
13. Visitors to the Schools
14. Public Conduct on School Property
15. Dissemination of the Code of Conduct

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1. INTRODUCTION

The SHCSD and the Sweet Home Board of Education are committed to providing a safe and orderly environment where our students will receive, and district personnel will deliver, quality educational services without disruption or interference. Appropriate and responsible behavior by students, teachers, district personnel, parents and other visitors is essential to providing such a safe school setting.

Sweet Home School District continually sets high expectations for conduct on school property and at school-related functions. These expectations are based on the qualities of civility, mutual respect, citizenship, character, tolerance, honesty, and integrity.

The Sweet Home Board of Education supports the importance of clearly defined expectations for acceptable conduct on school property, identifying the possible consequences of unacceptable conduct and ensuring that discipline is administered promptly and fairly.

All SHCSD employees must abide by and enforce school rules in a fair and consistent manner, and are expected to maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender/gender identity, sex or other legally protected category. Employees must report incidents of discrimination and harassment that are witnessed or otherwise brought to their attention to the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) Dignity Act Coordinators (DAC's) or Civil Rights Compliance Officer (CRCO) in a timely manner. Similarly, students and parents are expected to report incidents of discrimination, harassment, and/or bullying for resolution.

SHCSD DAC's are as follows:

Sweet Home High School	Ty Critelli	(716) 250-1221
Sweet Home Middle School	Brandon Woods	(716) 250-1458
Glendale Elementary	Lynn Kawa	(716) 250-1512
Heritage Heights Elementary	Sal Glorioso	(716) 250-1533
Maplemere Elementary	Julie Eberle	(716) 250-1558

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Willow Ridge Elementary	Wendy Januchowski	(716) 250-1597

SHCSD CRCO's are as follows:

Sweet Home District Office	JoAnn Balazs	(716) 250-1408
Sweet Home District Office	Donald Feldmann	(716) 250-1406

2. DEFINITIONS

Please refer to the full length version of SHCSD Code of Conduct for definitions of select terms utilized throughout this document.

3. STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

SHCSD is committed to safeguarding the rights given to all students under state and federal laws. Conversely, we expect our students to carry out their responsibilities in order for all students to receive the best education possible. Please refer to the full length version of SHCSD Code of Conduct for rights and responsibilities of students.

4. ROLE OF ESSENTIAL PARTNERS

Students, parents/guardians, instructional staff, administrators, the District Superintendent and the Board of Education all have an essential role in maintaining safe, orderly and effective schools. The roles and expectations for each of these individuals are specified in the full length version of SHCSD Code of Conduct.

5. STUDENT CIVILITY AND DRESS CODE

All student interaction and communication between one another, and with adults will be appropriate and civil. Students are expected to behave with dignity and treat others with courtesy and respect. Students should respect peers, teachers, administrators, and other school personnel. Individual behavior should not interfere with the rights of others.

Students are expected to utilize language that is appropriate and respectful. Vulgar language including, but not limited to, negative comments based on race, ethnicity, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender/gender identity, sex, or other legally protected categories, and obscene comments or gestures toward others will not be tolerated.

All students are expected to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to dress appropriately for school and school functions. All district personnel, including student teachers, should exemplify and reinforce acceptable student dress.

A student's dress, grooming and appearance shall be safe, appropriate and should not disrupt or interfere with the educational process.

School authorities may prohibit dress, which is so distracting as to interfere with the learning process. Students are not permitted to wear items that are vulgar, obscene or libelous or that denigrate others. Clothing/accessories may not promote and/or endorse the use of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs and/or encourage other illegal or violent activities, and extremely brief garments, see-through garments and the exposure of undergarments are not appropriate in an educational setting. Students may not wear head covers, hoods, coats, jackets, earbuds/headphones, blankets or sunglasses during the course of the instructional day, except for those whose spiritual belief or medical condition dictates otherwise. Students must wear proper footwear.

6. PROHIBITED STUDENT CONDUCT

All students must promptly report any prohibited conduct to an administrator or teacher. No one who, in good faith, reports a violation will be retaliated against. However, a student who knowingly makes a false accusation will face disciplinary action.

Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- **Conduct that is disorderly or disruptive**, including engaging in behavior that interferes with the health and safety of others, the learning environment, the school community, or SHCSD activities; engaging in any act which disrupts the normal operation of the school community; or trespassing;
- **Conduct that is insubordinate**, including failure to comply with the reasonable directive of teachers, administrators, and other SHCSD staff;
- **Conduct that is violent,** including threats of violence, acts of violence, possession of weapons and/or firearm, or the intentional destruction of property;

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- **Conduct that endangers the safety, morals, health or welfare of others,** including lying to school personnel; stealing; defamation; discrimination; harassment or sexual harassment; intimidating, bullying or hazing; cyber violations, including inappropriate or unauthorized use of technology and/or the internet to engage in behaviors including, but not limited to bullying, intimidating, threatening, harassing, maligning and/or defaming others, accessing websites for non-academic purposes (e.g.social networking; media downloads, etc.), as well as use of unauthorized proxies or "tunneling"; possessing, using or selling alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, and other prohibited substances and/or paraphernalia; using vulgar or abusive language; smoking of any form; gambling; inappropriate touching or indecent exposure; or initiating a false report of an emergency; failure to ~~wear a mask during a pandemic;~~ comply with Federal or State mandates related to a pandemic or other emergency or natural disaster.

- **Misuse of technology**, including displaying, using or having powered on, any personal technology equipment (i.e. mobile/cellular telephone, Smartwatch, camera, iPod, video camera, laptop, iPad, tablet, e-reader, laser pointer, etc.) or any other type of telecommunication, multimedia or imaging device ***during class or instructional time***, except as expressly permitted in connection with authorized use in classrooms. This includes audio and video recording.

While students are permitted to possess such devices and their associated accessories (i.e. headphones, earbuds) during the school day, they are prohibited from using them in any manner that interferes with, or is disruptive of the educational process or invades the privacy of, or compromises the safety of students, employees, volunteers, or visitors. This includes in the restrooms and/or locker rooms and/or the videotaping of a physical or verbal altercation. Students are not permitted to use any form of information technology, including their own personal devices to intimidate, harass, or threaten others. This type of harassment is generally referred to as cyberbullying. If a student violates this prohibition, then he/she is subject to discipline under this provision and/or any other provision in this Code of Conduct that may be applicable to the circumstances involved.

Any electronic device that is permitted on school property is encouraged to be kept on the person and in a concealed manner. The Sweet Home Central School District is not responsible for loss or damage to any electronic device;

- **Misconduct while at the bus stop or while on a school bus**, including eating; smoking, fighting, using foul language, bringing unauthorized items on the bus, throwing items from the bus; extending any body part from the window of the bus; opening the main door of the bus; using the emergency door except in the case of a real emergency; or any other violation of the SHCSD Code of Conduct; and

- **Academic misconduct,** including plagiarism (use of e.g. ChapGPT), cheating, collusion, forging, altering records, other forms of cheating or assisting others in any form of the aforementioned actions;

The Board recognizes the need to make its expectations for student conduct while on school property or engaged in a school function specific and clear. Students who will not accept responsibility for their own behavior and who violate district/school rules will be required to accept the consequences for their conduct.

7. REPORTING VIOLATIONS

All students are expected to promptly report any violation of the Code of Conduct to a teacher or administrator. This includes incidents of other students or staff being harassed or discriminated against by students, school staff or other individuals on school property.

8. DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES, PROCEDURES AND REFERRALS

All district staff members who are authorized to impose disciplinary sanctions are expected to do so in a prompt, fair and lawful manner. Students who are found to violate the district's Code of Conduct may be subject to consequences, either alone or in combination, that includes:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Written notification to parents/guardians
- Detention
- Suspension from transportation
- Suspension from athletic participation
- Suspension from extracurricular activities
- Suspension of privileges
- In-school suspension
- Community service
- Removal from classroom
- Short-term suspension from school (five days or less)

- Long-term suspension from school (more than five days)
- Permanent suspension from school

Offenses by ~~middle and high school~~ students in the following areas would usually result in building-level suspension of five days along with a referral to a Superintendent hearing: 1) use of alcohol/drugs; 2) fighting/physical altercation; 3) deliberate destruction of school property/vandalism; 4) theft of any kind; 5) sexual misconduct.

9. ALTERNATIVE INSTRUCTION

When a student of any age is removed from class by a teacher or a student of compulsory attendance age is suspended from school pursuant to Education Law

§3214, the district will take immediate steps to provide alternative means of instruction for the student.

10. DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Board of Education recognizes that the need to address disruptive or problem behavior within its schools may result in the suspension, removal or other discipline of students with disabilities eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Article 89 of the Education Law (Article 89) and their implementing regulations. It also recognizes that these students with disabilities enjoy certain procedural protections whenever school authorities intend to impose discipline upon them.

11. PROHIBITION OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

No teacher, administrator, officer, employee or agent of the District shall use corporal punishment against a pupil. Corporal punishment means any act of physical force upon a pupil for the purpose of punishing that pupil.

However, reasonable physical force may be used: to protect oneself, another pupil, teacher or any other person from physical injury; to protect the property of the school or others; or to restrain or remove a pupil whose behavior is interfering with the orderly exercise and performance of District functions, powers and duties, if that pupil has refused to comply with a request to refrain from further disruptive acts.

12. STUDENT SEARCHES OR INTERROGATIONS

School officials who are authorized to discipline students may question a student about any alleged violation of the law or the Code of Conduct. Officials are not required to contact parents/guardians before questioning a student. All students will be told why they are being questioned.

In addition, school property including lockers are subject to search by school officials at any time. Officials may also search students and/or their belongings if they have reasonable suspicion that the search will result in evidence that the student violated the law or Code of Conduct. More information about student searches and interrogations can be found in the complete Code of Conduct document.

It should be noted that district officials are committed to cooperating with police officials and child protective services to maintain a safe school environment. Specific procedures are detailed in the complete Code of Conduct.

13. VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

Parents and other district citizens are encouraged to visit the district's schools and classrooms to observe the work of students, teachers and other staff. Since schools are a place of work and learning, certain limits must be set for such visits. The building principal or his or her designee is responsible for all persons in the building and on the grounds. The following rules apply to visitors to the schools:

- Anyone who is not a regular staff member, district employee, or student of the school will be considered a visitor.
- Prior to entering the building, all visitors should be prepared to provide government issued photo identification and state the purpose for their visit. They will be required to register through our Raptor Visitor Management System and will be issued a visitor's identification badge, which must be worn at all times while in the school or on school grounds. The visitor must return the identification badge to the attendance office upon exiting the building.
- Parents or citizens who wish to observe a classroom while school is in session are required to arrange such visits in advance with the classroom teacher(s).
- Teachers are not to take class time to discuss individual matters with visitors.
- Unauthorized persons will be asked to leave the building.
- All visitors are expected to abide by the rules for public conduct on school property and at all school functions.

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14. PUBLIC CONDUCT ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

All persons on school property or attending a school function shall conduct themselves in a respectful and orderly manner, following all established school and district policies and regulations. All persons on school property or attending a school are expected to be properly attired for the purpose they are on school property.

Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Possess or use weapons in or on school property or at a school function, except in the case of law enforcement officers or specifically authorized by the school district.
- Intentionally injure any person or threaten to do so.
- Disrupt the orderly conduct of classes, school programs or other school activities.
- Refuse to comply with any reasonable request of school district personnel, including but not limited to, leaving the property or moving a vehicle.
- Distribute or wear materials on school grounds or at school functions that are obscene, advocate illegal action, appear libelous, obstruct the rights of others, or are disruptive to the school program.
- Intimidate, threaten, harass, bully, or discriminate against any person on the basis of the person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, creed, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability.
- Intentionally damage or destroy school district property or the personal property of a teacher, administrator, or other district employee, or any person lawfully on school property. This includes graffiti or arson.
- Enter any portion of the school premises without authorization or remain in any building or facility after it is normally closed.
- Obstruct the free movement of any person is any place to which this Code applies.
- Violate traffic directions, signs or traffic control devices, parking regulations or other restrictions on vehicles.
- Possess, consume, sell, distribute, share, or exchange alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, or be under the influence of any such item on school property or at a school function.
- Smoke or use any tobacco or nicotine products, including e-cigarettes, on school property or grounds.

- Loiter on or about school property.
- Gamble on school property or at a school function.
- Violate the Acceptable Use of Technology procedures established by the District.
- Willfully incite others to commit any of the acts prohibited by this Code.
- Violate any federal or state statute, local ordinance or Board of Education policy while on school property or while at a school function.

Persons who violate this Code of Conduct shall be subject to the following penalties:

1. Visitors/Spectators: Their authorization, if any, to remain on school grounds or at school functions may be withdrawn/suspended and they may be directed to leave the premises. If they refuse to leave, they shall be subject to ejection by designated security or law enforcement officials. The length of said suspension shall be determined by the severity of the violation, and violators will receive written notice of the District's determination.

2. Students: They may be subject to disciplinary action as the facts may warrant in accordance with due process requirements.

3. School Personnel: They may be subject to disciplinary action as the facts may warrant in accordance with due process requirements.

15. DISSEMINATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

The complete Sweet Home Central School District Code of Conduct is available on the Sweet Home website at: www.sweethomeschools.org.

Copies of the complete Code of Conduct are available by contacting JoAnn Balazs, Assistant Superintendent for Talent & Equity, at (716) 250-1408.

The Code of Conduct is reviewed and updated as necessary each year. It is also approved by the Sweet Home Board of Education.

This summary document is being distributed to all students and parents pursuant to New York State Education Law.