

## **CODE OF CONDUCT SUMMARY**

The Middle Country Board of Education is committed to providing a safe and orderly school environment where students may receive and district personnel may deliver quality educational services without disruption or interference. Responsible behavior by students, district personnel, parents and other visitors is essential to achieving this goal.

The district has a long-standing set of expectations for conduct on school property and at school functions. These expectations are based on the principles of civility, mutual respect, personal responsibility, citizenship, character, tolerance, honesty, courtesy, integrity and observance of laws and rules. The Board recognizes the need to define clearly these expectations for observance of laws, and acceptable conduct on school property, to identify the consequences of unacceptable conduct, and to ensure that discipline when necessary is administered promptly and fairly. To this end, the Board adopts the Code of Conduct ("Code").

Unless otherwise indicated, this Code applies to all students, school personnel, parents and other visitors when on school property or attending a school function. Further information can be obtained by contacting your child's school.

### **The Code includes:**

- Provisions regarding conduct, dress and language deemed appropriate and acceptable on school property including school functions, and conduct, dress and language deemed *unacceptable and inappropriate* on school property, and the range of penalties associated with violating these provisions.
- Standards regarding acceptable, civil, and respectful treatment of teachers, school administrators, other school personnel, students, and visitors on school property, and include the range of penalties associated with violating these provisions.
- Provisions defining the roles of teachers, administrators, other school personnel, boards of education and parents.
- Standards and procedures to assure security and safety of students and school personnel.
- Provisions for removal from the classroom and from school property, including school functions, of students and other persons who violate provisions of the code.
- Disciplinary measures to be taken in incidents involving the possession or use of illegal substances or weapons, physical force, vandalism, violation of the civil rights of others, and threats of violence.
- Provisions for detention, suspension, and removal of students, which are consistent with federal, state, and local laws, including provisions for school authorities to establish policies and procedures to ensure the maintenance of educational programming and activities for students removed from the classroom or suspended from school.
- Procedures by which violations are to be reported, determined, and by which disciplinary measures are imposed and carried out.
- Provisions ensuring that the codes, and the enforcement thereof, are in compliance with state and federal laws relating to students with disabilities.
- Provisions setting forth the procedures by which local law enforcement agencies will be notified of code violations that constitute a crime.

- Provisions setting forth the circumstances under, and procedures by which, parents will be notified if their child violates the code.
- Provisions setting forth the circumstances under, and procedures by which, criminal court complaints, juvenile delinquency petitions or person in need of supervision petitions will be filed.
- Circumstances under and procedures by which referral to appropriate human service agencies shall be made.
- Procedures by which minimum suspension periods will be set for students who are substantially disruptive of the educational process or substantially interfere with teacher's authority over the classroom, provided that the suspending authority may reduce such period on a case by case basis to be consistent with any other state or federal law or regulation.
- Provisions for minimum suspension periods for acts that would qualify the pupil to be defined as a violent pupil, provided that the suspending authority may reduce such period on a case by case basis to be consistent with any other state or federal law or regulation.

### **Student Dress Code**

All students are expected to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to dress appropriately for school and school functions. Students and their parents have the primary responsibility for acceptable student dress and appearance. Teachers and all other District personnel should exemplify and reinforce acceptable student dress and help students develop an understanding of appropriate appearance in the school setting.

A student's dress, grooming and appearance, shall:

- Recognize that brief and/or see through garments are not appropriate.
- Ensure that underwear is completely covered with outer clothing.
- Include footwear at all times. Footwear that is a safety hazard will not be allowed.
- Not include spiked jewelry, hanging wallet/pocket chains, and dog collars.
- Not include items that are vulgar, obscene, libelous or denigrate others on account of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or disability.
- Not blatantly promote and/or endorse the use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs and/or encourage other illegal or violent activities.
- Not include the wearing of hoods and all headgear including hats, bandanas, stockings and do-rags within the school buildings, except for a medical or religious purpose.
- Not include attire and/or insignia(s) related to a known gang.

Each Principal or his or her designee shall be responsible for informing all students and their parents of the student dress code at the beginning of the school year and any revisions to the dress code made during the school year.

Students who violate the student dress code shall be required to modify their appearance by covering or removing the offending item and, if necessary or practical, replacing it with an

acceptable item. Any student who refuses to do so shall be subject to discipline, up to and including in-school suspension for the day. Any student who repeatedly fails to comply with the dress code shall be subject to further discipline, up to and including out of school suspension.

### **Student Responsibilities**

All district students have the responsibility to:

- Contribute to maintaining a safe and orderly school environment that is conducive to learning and to show respect to other persons and to property.
- Be familiar with and abide by all District policies, rules and regulations dealing with student conduct.
- Attend school every day unless they are legally excused and be in class, on time, and prepared to learn.
- Work to the best of their ability in all academic and extracurricular pursuits and strive toward their highest level of achievement possible.
- React to direction given by teachers, administrators and other school personnel in a respectful, positive manner.
- Work to develop mechanisms to control their anger.
- Ask questions when they do not understand.
- Seek help in solving problems that might lead to discipline.
- Dress appropriately for school and school functions.
- Accept responsibility for their actions.
- Conduct themselves as representatives of the district when participation in or attending school-sponsored extracurricular events and to hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct, demeanor, and sportsmanship.

### **Title IX/DASA:**

Title IX prohibits educational institutions that receive federal funding from discriminating on the basis of sex. The law addresses both discrimination and harassment, including peer-on-peer harassment as well as instances where a teacher or other school employee harasses a student. It also guarantees equal athletic participation to students regardless of sex, and may be used to target harassment based on a student's failure to conform to gender stereotypes. Middle Country adheres to Title IX regulations mandated by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare by not discriminating on the basis of sex in its education programs or employment practices. The School District's Title IX Compliance Officer is Francine McMahon, Deputy Superintendent for Instruction. Students in New York schools are also protected by federal, state, and local laws that also provide protection against bullying and require schools to take certain affirmative steps to guarantee equal education for students with disabilities

The New York State Dignity for all Students Act was established to provide a school environment free of discrimination and harassment for all students. The Dignity Act states that no student shall be subjected to harassment by employees or other students, nor shall any student be subjected to discrimination based on actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or sex. The New York State Dignity for all Students Act includes bullying and cyberbullying occurring either on or off school property where such acts would foreseeably create a risk or substantial disruption within

the school. For more information, visit the District's website at MCCSD.net, and click on the "Dignity for All Students Act (DASA): NYS's Anti-Bullying Law" link under the "Students & Parents" header on the main website. Each school has Dignity Act Coordinators to whom complaints may be forwarded, as well as two Districtwide Dignity Act Coordinators. Please visit the "Dignity for All Students Act (DASA): NYS's Anti-Bullying Law" page on the District's website for such contact information. All claims of bullying/harassment, sexual harassment or discrimination can be brought to any assistant principal's office or the principal's office.

#### **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES:**

Students are discouraged from bringing cell phones to school due to their potential for damage, loss or theft. Students may carry electronic communication devices as long as they do not interrupt the educational process. Making phone calls and text messaging is prohibited during school hours (7:05-1:50). Students can have phones out in non-instructional settings for games and music only. At all other times cell phones should be shut off. When used, proper etiquette should be observed so not to disturb others. Failure to adhere to these rules may result in confiscation of the device. **In addition, phones are strictly prohibited during Finals and Regents Exams. Being in possession of a cell phone or any other electronic device will result in the student's exam being invalidated. A score of zero will be averaged in for any invalidated exam.**

#### **ELECTRONIC DEVICES:**

Students are discouraged from bringing electronic music and game devices such as: radios, personal stereos, tape players, CD players, IPOD's and MP players due to the potential for damage, loss or theft. The school district is not responsible for loss or damage to these items. Use of these items is restricted to non- instructional settings. The privilege to use these devices in non-instructional settings may be revoked if such devices are used improperly.

#### **WEAPONS IN SCHOOL:**

The Middle Country Central School District is dedicated to providing a safe environment for our students. Students found in **POSSESSION** of a weapon or any item that can be construed as a weapon will be subject to the harshest disciplinary action. Students will be automatically suspended from school for a maximum amount of time (five days) that a building principal can suspend. During that five day period a Superintendent's hearing will be held where the recommendation may be **SUSPENSION FROM SCHOOL FOR ONE FULL YEAR**. A student under 16 years of age would be placed on home instruction during that period of time. Youngsters who have reached 17 years of age will not be provided with instruction. At the conclusion of the one-year suspension, students may apply to the Superintendent for readmission to school.

#### **POSSESSION OF ALCOHOL, DRUGS or DRUG PARAPHERNALIA:**

Use or possession of alcohol, drugs or drug paraphernalia in any form anywhere on school grounds is strictly prohibited. Violators are subject to severe disciplinary consequences and possible legal prosecution.

**SMOKING:**

Due to health hazards associated with smoking, and in accordance with federal and state law, the Board of Education prohibits smoking (including the use of vapes and electronic cigarettes) or other tobacco/nicotine use in all school buildings, on school property, or at school-sponsored activities.