

# Houston County Board of Education

Monitoring:  <b>Review: Annually, in March</b>	Descriptor Term:  <h2 style="text-align: center;">Code of Conduct</h2>	Descriptor Code: <h3 style="text-align: center;">6.300</h3>	Issued Date: <h3 style="text-align: center;">07/18/24</h3>
		Rescinds:	Issued: <b>07/08/13;</b> <b>05/12/14;</b> <b>05/13/19;</b> <b>06/08/20;</b> <b>06/13/22;</b> <b>06/12/23</b>

The Houston County Board of Education is committed to providing a safe and orderly school environment that encourages the academic, emotional, and social development of all students. The Board recognizes the need to clearly define these expectations for acceptable conduct on school property (including school vehicles) and at school-sanctioned events.

All students, when on school property (including school buses/vehicles) or attending school functions, will:

- follow all school rules.
- respect fellow students and all school personnel.
- exhibit academic integrity.
- use appropriate language, avoiding profanity, racial and ethnic slurs, or any other denigration of others in communications.
- assist to eliminate the use of violence, bullying, and intimidation of others.
- demonstrate respect for school campuses and property.
- support their school’s activities and organizations.
- display good sportsmanship and school spirit.
- work to improve their school.

The Board delegates to the Director of Schools the responsibility of developing specific codes of conduct which are appropriate for each level of school.<sup>1</sup> Codes of conduct for students in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten shall utilize alternative disciplinary practices such as modeling, redirection, positive behavioral supports, individual behavior plans, and/or time out. Exclusionary discipline shall only be used as a measure of last resort.<sup>2</sup> The development of each code shall involve principals and staff members of each level and shall be based on evidence-based behaviors supports and interventions.<sup>3</sup>

The following levels of misbehavior and disciplinary procedures and options are standards designed to protect all members of the educational community in the exercise of their rights and duties and to maintain a safe learning environment where orderly learning is possible and encouraged.<sup>4</sup> These misbehaviors apply to student conduct on school buses, on school property, and while students are on school-sponsored outings. Staff members have the authority to enforce the code of conduct<sup>3</sup> and shall ensure that disciplinary measures are implemented in a manner that:<sup>5</sup>

1. Balances accountability with an understanding of traumatic behavior;

2. Teaches school and classroom rules while reinforcing that violent or abusive behavior is not allowed at school;
3. Minimizes disruptions to education with an emphasis on positive behavioral supports and behavioral intervention plans;
4. Creates consistent rules and consequences; and
5. Models respectful, non-violent relationships.

In order to ensure that these goals are accomplished, the school district shall utilize trauma-informed discipline practices, including but not limited to school-wide positive behavior supports, “Access for All” strategies, preventative strategies for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), individual behavior plans, and/or school Behavioral Support Teams planning and supports. Principals shall use appropriate discipline management techniques when enforcing the code of conduct.

### **MISBEHAVIORS: LEVEL/CATEGORY I**

This level includes minor misbehavior on the part of the student which impedes orderly classroom guidelines or interferes with the orderly operation of the school but which can usually be handled by an individual staff member.

*Examples (not an exclusive listing; see Student Discipline & Behavior section of the district’s current Student Handbook)*

- Classroom disturbances
- Classroom tardiness
- Cheating and lying
- Abusive/inappropriate language
- Failure to do assignments or carry out directions
- Wearing, while on the grounds of a public school during the regular school day, clothing that exposes underwear or body parts in an indecent manner that disrupts the learning environment<sup>6</sup>
- Victimization of any student (harassment (sexual, racial, ethnic, religious), bullying, cyber-bullying, and/or hazing)

#### *Disciplinary Procedures*

- The staff member intervenes immediately.
- The staff member determines what offense was committed and its severity.
- The staff member determines who committed the offense and if the student understands the nature of the offense.
- The staff member employs appropriate disciplinary options.
- The record of the offense and disciplinary action shall be maintained by the staff member.

#### *Disciplinary Options*

- Verbal reprimand
- Special assignment
- Restricting activities
- Counseling
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Supervised study
- In-school suspension
- Behavior plan

## **MISBEHAVIORS: LEVEL/CATEGORY II**

This level includes misbehavior whose frequency or seriousness tends to disrupt the learning climate of the school. These misbehaviors do not represent a direct threat to the health and safety of others but have educational consequences serious enough to require corrective action on the part of administrative personnel.

*Examples (not an exclusive listing; see Student Discipline & Behavior section of the district's current Student Handbook)*

- Continuation of unmodified Level I misbehaviors
- Using forged notes or excuses
- Disruptive classroom behavior

### *Disciplinary Procedures*

- The student is referred to the principal for appropriate disciplinary action.
- The principal meets with the student and the staff member.
- The principal hears the accusation made by the staff member and allows the student the opportunity to explain his/her conduct.
- The principal takes appropriate disciplinary action and notifies the staff member of the action.
- The record of offense and disciplinary action shall be maintained by the principal.

### *Disciplinary Options*

- Teacher/schedule change
- Peer counseling
- Referral to outside agency
- In-school suspension
- Suspension from school-sponsored activities or from riding school bus
- Out-of-school suspension
- Individual behavior plan

## **MISBEHAVIORS: LEVEL/CATEGORY III**

This level includes acts directly against persons or property but whose consequences do not seriously endanger the health or safety of others in the school.

*Examples (not an exclusive listing; see Student Discipline & Behavior section of the district's current Student Handbook)*

- Continuation of unmodified Level I and II misbehaviors
- Fighting
- Vandalism (minor)
- Use, possession, sale, distribution, and/or being under the influence of tobacco or alcohol
- Use, possession, sale, or distribution of drug paraphernalia
- Use, sale, distribution, and/or being under the influence of drugs
- Stealing
- Threats to others
- Victimization of any student (harassment (sexual, racial, ethnic, religious), bullying, cyber-bullying, and/or hazing)

#### *Disciplinary Procedures*

- The student is referred to the principal for appropriate disciplinary action.
- The principal meets with the student and the staff member.
- The principal hears the accusation and allows the student the opportunity to explain his/her conduct.
- The principal takes appropriate disciplinary action and notifies the staff member of the action.
- The principal may refer the incident to the Director of Schools and make recommendations for consequences.
- The record of offense and disciplinary action shall be maintained by the principal.

#### *Disciplinary Options*

- In-school suspension
- Detention
- Restitution from loss, damage, or stolen property
- Out-of-school suspension
- Social adjustment intervention/classes
- Behavior assessment
- Behavior intervention plan

### **MISBEHAVIORS: LEVEL IV/CATEGORY IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX**

This level of misbehavior includes acts which result in violence to another's person or property or which pose a threat to the safety of others in the school. These acts are so serious that they usually require administrative actions which result in the immediate removal of the student from the school, the intervention of law enforcement authorities, and/or action by the Board.

If a student's action poses a threat to the safety of others in the school, a teacher, principal, school employee, or school bus driver may use reasonable force when necessary to prevent bodily harm or death to another person.<sup>7</sup>

*Examples (not an exclusive listing; see Student Discipline & Behavior section of the district's current Student Handbook)<sup>8</sup>*

- Continuation of unmodified Level I, II, and III misbehaviors
- Death threat
- Threat of mass violence on school property or at a school-related activity\*
- Extortion
- Bomb threat\*
- Possession, use, and/or transfer of dangerous weapons\*
- Bringing to school or being in possession of a firearm on school property\*
- Assault
- Assault that results in bodily injury upon any teacher, principal, administrator, any other employee of the school, or a school resource officer\*
- Aggravated assault\*
- Vandalism
- Theft, possession, and/or sale of stolen property
- Arson
- Possession of unauthorized substances (e.g., any controlled substance, controlled substance analogue, or legend drug)\*
- Use or transfer of unauthorized substances
- Victimization of any student (harassment (sexual, racial, ethnic, religious), bullying, cyber-bullying, and/or hazing)
- Electronic threat to cause bodily injury or death to another student or school employee

#### *Disciplinary Procedures*

- Law enforcement officials and the Director of Schools are immediately contacted, if applicable.<sup>9</sup>
- The principal confers with appropriate staff members and with the student.
- The principal hears the accusations and allows the student the opportunity to explain his/her conduct.
- The parent(s)/guardian(s) are notified.
- Recommendations are made to the Director of Schools.
- The principal notifies the staff members of the resolution.
- If the student's placement is to be changed, adequate notice of the charges shall be given to the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) and his/her right to appear at a hearing.

#### *Disciplinary Options*

- Other hearing authority or Board action which results in appropriate placement
- Remandment to Alternative School

- Referral for outside services
- Behavior assessment/behavior plan

\* Designates zero tolerance offenses

A more detailed list of infractions and consequences are listed in the annual Houston County School District Student Handbook.

## DUE PROCESS

Before imposing disciplinary action, the teacher or administrator shall follow the procedural due process standards enumerated in Board Policy 6.302, and, in the case of suspension, expulsion or remand, the process enumerated in Board Policy 6.316.

NOTE: Discipline of students with disabilities shall comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

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### Legal References

1. [TCA 49-6-4005](#)
2. [TCA 49-6-3024](#)
3. [TCA 49-6-2801](#)
4. [TCA 49-6-4002](#)
5. [TCA 49-6-4109](#)
6. [TCA 49-6-4009](#)
7. [TCA 49-6-2802](#)
8. [TCA 39-16-517; TCA 49-6-3401\(g\); Public Acts of 2024, Chapter No. 882; Public Acts of 2024, Chapter No. 915;](#)
9. [Public Acts of 2024, Chapter No. 882](#)

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### Cross References

Security 3.205  
 Traffic and Parking Controls 3.403  
 Procedural Due Process 6.302  
 Student Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying, Cyber-bullying, and Intimidation 6.304  
 Title IX & Sexual Harassment 6.3041  
 Interference/Disruption of School Activities 6.306  
 Bus Safety and Conduct 6.308  
 Zero Tolerance Offenses 6.309  
 Dress Code 6.310  
 Corporal Punishment 6.314  
 Detention 6.315  
 Suspension 6.316  
 Safe Relocation of Students 6.4081