

CODE OF CONDUCTTABLE OF CONTENTS

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Special Notice for 2024-2025

WCSD will continue to encourage and foster the development of positive behaviors on the part of each student and provide a culturally responsive, respectful, safe, and orderly school setting. Responsible behavior by every person affiliated with our school community is essential to achieving this goal. While it is possible that some technical elements of the Code of Conduct may be temporarily modified as a result of forthcoming guidance or legal changes from New York State Education Department (NYSED) or the New York Department of Health (NYSDOH) (ie dress code rules, social distancing, visitor expectations, etc.), the overall intent remains: Watertown City School District will actively promote equity, cultural competence, inclusion, and academic readiness in a safe, and secure environment.

CODE OF CONDUCT**I. INTRODUCTION**

The 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, instructional staff, other District personnel, parents and other visitors is essential to achieving this goal. This Code of Conduct has been developed consistent with Article 2-A of the Education Law, the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act (Chapter 181 of the Laws of 2000) and Section 100.2 of the implementing Commissioners' Regulations, in collaboration with students, instructional staff, administrators, parent organizations, school safety personnel and other school personnel.

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, citizenship, character, tolerance, honesty and integrity.

The Board recognizes the need to clearly define these expectations for acceptable conduct on school property, identify the possible consequences of unacceptable conduct, and to ensure that discipline, when necessary, is administered promptly and fairly. To this end, the Board adopts this code of conduct ("code").

Unless otherwise indicated, this code applies to all students, school personnel, parents and other visitors on school property or attending a school function.

II. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this code, the following definitions apply.

"Cyberbullying" means harassment or bullying that occurs through any form of electronic communication.

"Disability" means (a) a physical, mental or medical impairment resulting from anatomical, physiological, genetic or neurological conditions which prevents the exercise of a normal bodily function or is demonstrable by medically accepted clinical or laboratory diagnostic techniques or (b) a record of such an impairment or (c) a condition regarded by others as such an impairment, provided, however, that in all provisions of this article dealing with employment, the term must be limited to disabilities which, upon the provision of reasonable accommodations, do not prevent the complainant from performing in a reasonable manner the activities involved in the job or occupation sought or held.

"Disruptive student" means an elementary (K-6) or secondary (7-12) student under the age of 21 who is substantially disruptive of the educational process or substantially interferes with the learning environment.

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“Gender” means the behavioral, cultural, and psychological traits typically associated with one’s biological sex.

“Gender Identity” means a person’s gender-related identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with the person’s physiology or biological sex at birth.

“Harassment or bullying” means the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation, or abuse, including cyberbullying as defined in Education Law section 11(8), that either:

1. has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student’s educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or with the student’s mental, emotional and/or physical well-being, including conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse that reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause emotional harm; or
2. reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury to a student or to cause a student to fear for their or her physical safety.

This Code applies to all acts of harassment or bullying that occur on school property or at a school function, as well as acts occurring off school property when (i) those acts create or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, and (ii) it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation, or abuse might reach school property.

"Parent" means parent, guardian or person in parental relation to a student.

“School property” means in or within any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, parking lot or land contained within the real property boundary line of a public elementary or secondary school, or on a school bus, as defined in Vehicle and Traffic Law §142.

“School function” means any school-sponsored extra-curricular event or activity. For the purposes of this policy, a “school function” is defined as any event, occurring on or off school property, sanctioned or approved by the school, including offsite athletic events, school dances, plays, musical productions, field trips or other school- sponsored trips.

“Sexual Orientation” means patterns of sexual, romantic and emotional attraction and one’s sense of identity based on those attractions.

“Violent student” means a student under the age of 21 who:

1. Commits an act of violence upon a school employee or attempts to do so.
2. Commits, while on school property or at a school function, an act of violence upon another student or any other person lawfully on school property or at the school function or attempts to do so.

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3. Possesses, while on school property or at a school function, a weapon.
4. Displays, while on school property or at a school function, what appears to be a weapon.
5. Threatens, while on school property or at a school function, to use a weapon.
6. Knowingly and intentionally damages or destroys the personal property of any school employee or any person lawfully on school property or at a school function.
7. Knowingly and intentionally damages or destroys school District property.

"Weapon" means a firearm as defined in 18 USC §921 for purposes of the Gun-Free Schools Act. It also means any other gun, BB gun, pistol, revolver, shotgun, rifle, machine gun, disguised gun, dagger, dirk, razor, stiletto, switchblade knife, gravity knife, brass knuckles, sling shot, metal knuckle knife, box cutters, cane sword, electronic dart gun, throwing star, electronic stun gun, pepper spray or other noxious spray, explosive or incendiary bomb, utility knife, paintball gun or other device, instrument, material or substance that can cause physical injury or death when used to cause physical injury or death.

For purposes of this policy, **"hazing"** is defined to mean committing an act against a student, or coercing a student into committing an act, that creates a risk of emotional, physical or psychological harm to the student, in order for the student to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization, or for any other purpose. The term "hazing" includes, but is not limited to: humiliating, degrading or dangerous activities; substance abuse of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine, marijuana, or illegal drugs; any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism, or adversely affects the health or safety of the student; or any activity that causes or requires the student to perform a task or act that is a violation of state or federal law or District policies/regulations.

III. STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Student Rights

The District is committed to safeguarding the rights given to all students under state and federal law. In addition, to promote a safe, healthy, orderly and civil school environment, all District students have the right to:

1. Participate in all District activities, in an environment free of discrimination and harassment, regardless of actual or perceived race, color, creed, body type, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender and gender identity (including gender identity or expression) or sex;
2. Present their version of the relevant events to school personnel authorized to impose a disciplinary consequence in connection with the imposition of the consequence.
3. Access school rules and, when necessary, receive an explanation of those rules from school personnel.
4. Have complaints about school-related incidents investigated and responded to.

CODE OF CONDUCT**Student Search and Seizure:**

5. In order to provide and maintain a safe and appropriate environment for students to learn, the following guidelines pertaining to student search and seizure are established.
6. The Board of Education hereby authorizes administrators to undertake searches of students and their possessions (e.g., pocket contents, bookbags, handbags, etc.) should the circumstances arise, based upon reasonable individualized suspicion. In the event of search and seizure, administrators must at all times take great care in searching the person and personal effects of student. The following rules will be observed:
 - a. The search may be undertaken if District employees have prior reasonable individualized suspicion that a student has violated or is violating the law, District policy or regulation or school rules.
 - b. “Reasonable individualized suspicion” is a flexible concept requiring the application of experience and common sense. Determinations should be made on a case-by-case basis, with due consideration of all circumstances. Factors which must be considered in determining whether a school official has sufficient cause to search a student include but are not limited to:
 - a) The prevalence and seriousness of the problem for which the search is directed.
 - b) The urgency to make the search without delay.
 - c) The reliability of the facts upon which to base a reasonable suspicion that the particular student has possession of evidence leading to a violation of school regulations.
 - d) The probability that evidence will be discovered.
 - e) Students will be asked to empty their pockets and otherwise comply with reasonable search requests. If a student refuses, the parents will be contacted. The police will be contacted in the event that a law enforcement search is required. The student will remain under direct supervision until the search.
 - c. Whenever an administrator conducts a search, the circumstances thereof are to be set forth in a written report to be filed with the Superintendent or their designee.
 - d. Students have no reasonable expectation of privacy rights in school lockers, desks or other school storage places, and the District

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exercises overriding control over such school property. Lockers, desks and other school storage places may be subject to inspection at any time by school officials.

- a) Student lockers, desks or other school storage places are the property of the District and remain at all times under the control of the District. Students have no expectations of privacy therein. Students are expected, however, to assume full responsibility for the security of their lockers, and the District is not responsible for stolen items. A list of the locker or lock combinations to all student lockers shall be kept in the office of the building Principal.
- b) The District retains the right to inspect student lockers, desks or other storage spaces at any time without a search warrant, without notice, and without student consent. Inspections may be conducted by authorized school personnel and/or law enforcement officials, and may be conducted with the assistance of drug-detecting dogs.
- e. Trained canines or related technologies may be utilized by the District in searches of students' possessions, school lockers, cars, desks or other school storage with prior approval of the plan by the building Principal and Superintendent.

B. Police in the School

The police may search a student, or their locker in the presence of the principal or their designee, if they have a valid warrant to do so or "probable cause" to believe that the student is in possession of anything prohibited by law, regulation, board policy, or this code ~~enforced~~ ~~enforced~~. When police are permitted to interview students in school, the students have the same Constitutional rights they have outside the school. Parents will be notified as soon as possible. If police wish to speak to a student concerning an out-of-school matter (in the absence of a warrant or probable cause for suspicion), they will be directed by school authorities to take the matter up directly with the student's parents except as provided in policy #7200, Reporting Child Abuse and Maltreatment.

C. Student Responsibilities

All District students have the responsibility to:

1. Contribute to maintaining a safe and orderly school environment that is conducive to learning and to show respect to other persons and to property.
2. Be familiar with and abide by all District policies, rules and regulations dealing with student conduct.
3. Attend school every day unless they are legally excused and be in class, on

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- time, and prepared to learn.
4. Work to the best of their ability in all academic and extracurricular pursuits and strive toward their highest level of achievement possible.
 5. React to direction given by instructional staff, administrators and other school personnel in a respectful, positive manner.
 6. Control their anger.
 7. Ask questions when they do not understand.
 8. Seek help in solving problems that might lead to discipline.
 9. Dress appropriately for school and school functions.
 10. Accept responsibility for their actions.
 11. Conduct themselves as representatives of the District when participating in or attending school-sponsored extracurricular events and to hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct, demeanor, and sportsmanship.
 12. Act and speak respectfully about issues/concerns.
 13. Use non-sexist, non-racist and other non-biased language.
 14. Respect and treat others with tolerance and dignity regardless of actual or perceived race, color, creed, body type, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender and gender identity (including gender identity or expression) or sex.
 15. Use communication that is non-confrontational and is not obscene or defamatory.
 16. Report acts of bullying, discrimination, harassment and other inappropriate actions that hurt or offend others.

IV. ESSENTIAL PARTNERS**A. Parents**

All parents are expected to:

1. Recognize that the education of their child(ren) is a joint responsibility of the parents and the school community.
2. Send their child(ren) to school ready to participate and learn.
3. Ensure their child(ren) attend school regularly and on time.
4. Ensure absences are excused.
5. Insist their child(ren) be dressed and groomed in a manner consistent with the student dress code.
6. Help their child(ren) understand that in a democratic society appropriate rules are required to maintain a safe, orderly environment.
7. Know school rules and help their child(ren) understand the consequences of their actions.
8. Convey to their child(ren) a supportive attitude toward education and the District.
9. Build good relationships with instructional staff, other parents and their child(ren)'s friends.
10. Help their child(ren) deal effectively with peer pressure.
11. Inform school officials of changes in the home situation that may affect

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student conduct or performance.

12. Provide a place for study and ensure homework assignments are completed.
13. Maintain a climate of mutual respect when dealing with school personnel.
14. Encourage their child(ren) to use respectful and professionally appropriate language.

B. Instructional staff

All District instructional staff are expected to:

1. Develop and maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, creed, body type, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender and gender identity (including gender identity or expression) or sex, with the intent of strengthening students' self-concept and promote confidence to learn.
2. Be prepared to teach.
3. Demonstrate interest in teaching and concern for student achievement.
4. Know school policies and rules and enforce them in a fair and consistent manner.
5. Communicate to students and parents:
 - a. Course objectives and requirements
 - b. Marking/grading procedures
 - c. Assignment deadlines
 - d. Expectations for students
 - e. Classroom discipline plan
6. Communicate regularly with students, parents and other instructional staff concerning growth and achievement.
7. Report orally to their DASA Coordinator any incident of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination that they witness or that is reported to them, not more than one day later; and file a written report (see Board of Education - Regulation 7202.1) not later than two (2) school days after the initial oral report. Additionally, there is a link to the DASA reporting form on the main page of our website: www.watertowncsd.org.

C. School Counselors

1. Assist students in coping with peer pressure and emerging personal, social and emotional problems.
2. Confront issues of discrimination and harassment or any situation that threatens the emotional, mental or physical health or safety of any student, school employee or any person who is lawfully on school property or at a school function.
3. Address personal biases that may prevent equal treatment of all students in the school or classroom setting.
4. Report incidents of discrimination and harassment that are witnessed or

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otherwise brought to a instructional staff's or staff member's attention in a timely manner.

5. Initiate instructional staff/student/counselor conferences and parent/instructional staff /student/ counselor conferences, as necessary, as a way to resolve problems.
6. Regularly review with students their educational progress and career plans (Secondary only).
7. Provide information to assist students with career planning (Secondary only).
8. Encourage students to benefit from the curriculum and extracurricular programs.
9. Report orally to their Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) Coordinator any incident of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination that they witness or that is reported to them, not more than one school day later; and file a written report not later than (1) school days-after the initial oral report.

D. Principals

1. Promote a safe, orderly and stimulating school environment, supporting active teaching and learning.
2. Develop and maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, creed, body type, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity or expression) or sex, with the intent of strengthening students' confidence and promote learning.
3. Ensure that students and staff have the opportunity to communicate regularly with the Principal and approach the Principal for redress of grievances.
4. Evaluate on a regular basis all instructional programs.
5. Support the development of and student participation in appropriate extracurricular activities.
6. Be responsible for enforcing the code of conduct and ensuring that all cases are resolved promptly and fairly.
7. Act as DASA Coordinator, complete a report of any incident of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination that they witness or that is reported to them, not more than one day later.

E. Superintendent

1. Promote a safe, orderly and stimulating school environment, supporting active teaching and learning.
2. Maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, creed, body type, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity or expression) or sex, with the intent of strengthening students' confidence and promote learning.
3. Review with District administrators the policies of the Board of Education and state and federal laws relating to school operations and management.
4. Inform the Board about educational trends relating to student discipline.

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5. Work to create instructional programs that minimize problems of misconduct and are sensitive to student and instructional staff needs.
6. Work with District administrators in enforcing the code of conduct and ensuring that all cases are resolved promptly and fairly.
7. Review in a timely manner all reports prepared by the Compliance Coordinator or a DASA Coordinator concerning an incident of alleged harassment, bullying and/or discrimination, and ensure that appropriate reports are made to law enforcement and appropriate corrective actions have been taken in school.

F. Board of Education

1. Collaborate with students, instructional staff, administrators, and parent organizations, school safety personnel and other school personnel to develop a code of conduct that clearly defines expectations for the conduct of students, District personnel and visitors on school property and at school functions.
2. Adopt and review at least annually the District's code of conduct to evaluate the effectiveness, fairness and consistency of its implementation.
3. Lead by example by conducting Board meetings in a professional, respectful, and courteous manner.

V. STUDENT DRESS CODE

Students are to be treated equitably regardless of actual or perceived race, color, creed, body type, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender and gender identity (including gender identity or expression) or sex. Students are expected to give proper attention to personal hygiene and cleanliness and to dress appropriately for school and school functions. Students and their parents have the primary responsibility for acceptable student dress and appearance. Instructional staff 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:

1. Be safe, appropriate and not disrupt or interfere with the educational process.
2. Any and all part of the body normally covered by undergarments must be covered at all times by clothing that is opaque (non-transparent). "Overly tight or revealing garments" are not allowed.
3. Must wear footwear at all times. Footwear that is a safety hazard will not be allowed (e.g. slippers).
4. No hats may be worn during the school day except for medical, ~~or~~ religious, or cultural (NYS CROWN Act, 2019) purposes. Bandanas, or other head coverings depicting or signifying gang affiliation, coats, chains (other than cosmetic) and sunglasses are not to be worn in the building except for medical or religious purposes. Any apparel or accessories that may represent or reflect gang

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- membership or affiliation is unacceptable on school property.
5. Not include items that are vulgar, obscene, libelous, or denigrate others on account of race, color, creed, religion, body type, religious practice, national origin, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, innuendo, disability, or any other protected class.
 6. Not promote and/or endorse the use of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine, marijuana, or illegal drugs and/or encourage other illegal or violent activities.

Each Building Principal or their 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 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.

VI. PROHIBITED STUDENT CONDUCT

The Board of Education expects all students to conduct themselves in an appropriate and civil manner, with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students, District personnel and other members of the school community, and for the care of school facilities and equipment.

The best discipline is self-imposed, and students must learn to assume and accept responsibility for their own behavior, as well as the consequences of their behavioral choices. District personnel who interact with students are expected to use disciplinary action only when necessary and to place emphasis on the students' ability to grow in self-discipline.

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. The rules of conduct listed below are intended to do that and focus on safety and respect for the rights and property of others. Students who will not accept responsibility for their own behavior and who violate these school rules will be required to accept the consequences for their conduct.

Students may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension from school, when they:

A. Engage in conduct that is disorderly or unsafe. Examples of disorderly or unsafe conduct include:

1. Running in hallways
2. Making unreasonable noise
3. Using language or gestures that are profane, lewd, vulgar or abusive
4. Obstructing vehicular or pedestrian traffic

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5. Engaging in any willful act which disrupts the normal operation of the school community.
6. Trespassing. Students are not permitted in any school building, other than the one they regularly attend, without permission from the administrator in charge of the building.
7. Computer/electronic communications misuse, including any unauthorized use of computers, software, or internet/intranet account; accessing inappropriate web sites; or any other violation of the District's acceptable use policy.

B. Engage in conduct that is insubordinate. Examples of insubordinate conduct include:

1. Failing to comply with the reasonable directions of instructional staff, school administrators or other school employees in charge of students or otherwise demonstrating disrespect.
2. Lateness for, missing or leaving school without permission, or failing to follow sign-in/sign-out procedures.
3. Skipping detention.

C. Engage in conduct that is disruptive. Examples of disruptive conduct include:

1. Failing to comply with the reasonable directions of instructional staffs, school administrators or other school personnel in charge of students.
2. Exhibiting behavior that is disruptive or counterproductive to the learning or educational environment.

D. Engage in conduct that is violent. Examples of violent conduct include:

1. Committing an act of violence (such as hitting, kicking, punching, or scratching) upon a instructional staff, administrator or other school employee or attempting to do so.
2. Committing an act of violence (such as hitting, kicking, punching, or scratching) upon another student or any other person lawfully on school property or attempting to do so.
3. Possessing a weapon. Authorized law enforcement officials are the only persons permitted to have a weapon in their possession while on school property or at a school function.
4. Displaying what appears to be a weapon.
5. Threatening to use any weapon.
6. Intentionally damaging or destroying the personal property of a student, instructional staff, administrator, other District employee or any person lawfully on school property, including graffiti or arson.
7. Intentionally damaging or destroying school District property.

E. Engage in any conduct that endangers the safety, morale, health or welfare of others. Examples of such conduct include:

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1. Lying to school personnel;
2. Stealing the property of other students, school personnel or any other person lawfully on school property or attending a school function;.
3. Defamation, which includes making false or unprivileged statements or representations about an individual or identifiable group of individuals that harm the reputation of the person or the identifiable group by demeaning them;
4. Discrimination, which includes the use of a person's actual or perceived race, color, creed, national origin, body type, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, gender and gender identity (including gender identity or expression), sexual orientation or disability as a basis for treating another in a negative manner;
5. Harassment or bullying, as defined in Section II of the Code of Conduct, labeled "Definitions;"
6. Intimidation, which includes engaging in actions or statements that put an individual in fear of bodily harm or emotional harm;
7. Selling, using or possessing obscene material;
8. Using vulgar or abusive language, cursing or swearing;
9. Using, possessing or distributing tobacco or nicotine products including vapes, cigarettes, e-cigarettes, cigars, pipes or chewing or smokeless tobacco;
10. Possessing, consuming, selling, distributing or exchanging alcoholic beverages or illegal substances, or being under the influence of either. "Illegal substances" include, but are not limited to, inhalants, marijuana, synthetic marijuana or cannabinoids, including but not limited to items labeled as incense, herbal mixtures or potpourri, cocaine, LSD, PCP, amphetamines, heroin, steroids, look-alike drugs, and any substances commonly referred to as "designer drugs;"
11. Inappropriately using or sharing prescription and over-the-counter drugs
12. Gambling on school property or at school functions;
13. Indecent exposure, that is, exposure to sight of the private parts of the body in a lewd or indecent manner;
14. Initiating a report warning of fire or other catastrophe without valid cause, misuse of 911, or discharging a fire extinguisher;
15. Exhibiting behavior that is disruptive or counterproductive to the learning or educational environment;

F. Engage in misconduct while on a school bus.

It is crucial for students to behave appropriately while riding on District buses, to ensure their safety and that of other passengers and to avoid distracting the bus driver. Students are required to conduct themselves on the bus in a manner consistent with established standards for classroom behavior. Excessive noise, pushing, shoving and fighting will not be tolerated.

G. Engage in any form of academic misconduct. Examples of academic

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1. Plagiarism.
2. Cheating.
3. Copying.
4. Altering records.

- H.** Assisting another student(s) in any of the above actions in addition to the preceding standards of conduct, the District prohibits discrimination and harassment against any student by employees or students that creates a hostile environment by conduct (with or without physical conduct) or verbal statements, intimidation, or abuse. We consider a hostile environment to be created when actions or statements directed at a student either (1) have or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits, or with the student's mental, emotional, or physical well-being including conduct that reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause emotional harm, or (2) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury to a student or to cause a student to fear for their physical safety.

This prohibition applies to all acts of discrimination, harassment or bullying that occur on school property or at a school function, as well as to acts occurring off school property when (i) those acts create or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, and (ii) it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation, or abuse might reach school property.

The prohibition of discrimination includes, but is not limited to, threats, intimidation, or abuse based on the student's actual or perceived race, color, creed, body type, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practices, disability, sexual orientation, gender and gender identity, or sex.

VII. AGE-APPROPRIATE RESTATEMENT OF POLICY

Students should act towards other students only in ways that make them feel safe and able to concentrate on their schoolwork, regardless of what they think about their race, color, creed, body type, national origin (where one's family comes from), ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity or expression), or sex, or any other reason. It is against school rules to make students feel threatened or unsafe, or unable to concentrate on schoolwork, whether through physical action or verbal statements, including electronic messages. All students should feel safe to come to school and participate in all school activities.

VIII. REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO VIOLATIONS**A. Reporting Possible Violations**

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All students are expected to promptly report violations of the code of conduct to a instructional staff, school counselor, the Building Principal or their designee. Any student observing a student possessing a weapon, vape, marijuana, alcohol, tobacco, nicotine or other illegal substance on school property or at a school function shall report this information immediately to a instructional staff, the Principal, the Principal's designee or the Superintendent of Schools.

All District staff who are authorized to impose disciplinary sanctions are expected to do so in a prompt, fair and lawful manner. District staff who are not authorized to impose disciplinary sanctions are expected to promptly (with little or no delay) report violations of the code of conduct to their supervisor, who shall review and impose an appropriate disciplinary sanction, if so authorized, or refer the matter to a staff member who is authorized to impose an appropriate sanction.

Any weapon, alcohol, marijuana, nicotine, tobacco, or other illegal substance found shall be confiscated by a District official immediately, if possible, followed by notification to the parent(s) of the student involved and the appropriate disciplinary sanction, which may include permanent suspension and referral for prosecution.

The Principal or their designee must notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency of those code violations that constitute a crime and substantially affect the order or security of a school as soon as practical, but in no event later than the close of business the day the Principal or their designee learns of the violation. The notification may be made by telephone, followed by a letter mailed on the same day as the telephone call is made. The notification must identify the student and explain the conduct that violated the code of conduct and constituted a crime.

B. Responding to Reports of Possible Harassment or Discrimination

1. In addition to the procedures described below for removal of disruptive students and possible suspension from attendance, the District provides a procedure for responding to reports of possible discrimination or harassment against students by another student, an employee, or any other person on school property or at a school function. The process is described in the District's Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination Policy.
2. The District has also designated a Dignity Act Coordinator for each school. Those coordinators are:

Leslie Atkinson, Watertown High School; 1335 Washington Street,
Watertown, NY 13601

Katherine Cook, Principal, Case Middle School; 1237 Washington
Street, Watertown, NY 13601

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Chad Fairchild, Principal, H.T. Wiley Intermediate School; 1351 Washington Street, Watertown, NY 13601

Ashleigh Barnhart-Burto, Principal, Knickerbocker School; 739 Knickerbocker Drive, Watertown, NY 13601

Sandra Cain, Principal, North Elementary School; 171 E. Hoard Street, Watertown, NY 13601

Jessica Blair, Principal, Ohio School; 1537 Ohio Street, Watertown, NY 13601

Gretchen Monnat, Principal, Sherman School; 836 Sherman Street, Watertown, NY 13601

Thomas Nabinger, Principal, Starbuck School; 430 E. Hoard Street, Watertown, NY 13601

The Dignity Act Coordinators are trained in methods to respond to human relations in the areas of race, color, creed, body type, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity or expression), and sex. They are available to speak with any person who has witnessed possible discrimination or harassment, or if that person has experienced treatment that may be prohibited discrimination or harassment.

C. No Retaliation for Reporting

No act of retaliation may be directed at any person who makes a good faith report of conduct by another person that may reasonably be a violation of this Code, or who assists in, or is part of, the investigation of such a report. To engage in such retaliation is considered a violation of this Code of Conduct.

IX. DISCIPLINARY PENALTIES, PROCEDURES AND REFERRALS

Discipline is most effective when it deals directly with the problem at the time and place it occurs, and in a way that students view as fair and impartial. School personnel who interact with students are expected to use disciplinary action only when necessary and to place emphasis on the students' ability to grow in self-discipline.

Disciplinary action, when necessary, will be firm, fair and consistent so as to be the most effective in changing student behavior. In determining the appropriate disciplinary action, school personnel authorized to impose disciplinary consequences will consider the following:

1. The student's age.
2. The nature of the offense and the circumstances which led to the offense.

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3. The student's prior disciplinary record.
4. The effectiveness of other forms of discipline.
5. Information from parents, instructional staff and/or others, as appropriate.
6. Any behavioral interventions in place for the students.
7. Other extenuating circumstances.

As a general rule, discipline will be progressive. This means that a student's first violation will usually merit a lighter consequence than subsequent violations.

Responses to acts of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination against students by students shall use measured, balanced, and age-appropriate remedies and procedures, with the goals of prevention and education, as well as intervention and discipline. We will consider the nature and severity of the conduct, the developmental age of the student engaging in the conduct, the student's prior disciplinary record, and the impact of the conduct on the student at whom it was directed.

If the conduct of a student is related to a disability or suspected disability, the student shall be referred to the Committee on Special Education and discipline, if warranted, shall be administered consistent with the separate requirements of this code of conduct for disciplining students with a disability or presumed to have a disability. A student identified as having a disability shall not be disciplined for behavior related to their disability.

A. Consequences

Students who are found to have violated the District's code of conduct may be subject to the following consequences, either alone or in combination with other students. The school personnel identified after each consequence are authorized to impose that consequence, consistent with the student's right to due process.

1. Oral warning – any member of the District staff
2. Written warning – bus drivers, hall and lunch monitors, coaches, school counselors, instructional staff, Principal, Superintendent
3. Written notification to parent(s) – bus drivers, hall and lunch monitors, coaches, school counselors, instructional staff, Principal, Superintendent
4. Detention – instructional staff, Principal, Superintendent
5. Restitution for damage to property – Principal, Superintendent
6. Work detail – Principal, Superintendent
7. Suspension from transportation – Director of Transportation, Principal, Superintendent
8. Suspension from athletic participation – coaches, Athletic Director, Principal, Superintendent
9. Suspension from social or extracurricular activities – Activity Director, Principal, Superintendent
10. Suspension of other privileges – Principal, Superintendent

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11. In-school suspension – Principal, Superintendent
12. Removal from classroom by instructional staff – instructional staff, Principal
13. Short-term (five days or less) suspension from school – Principal, Superintendent, Board
14. Long-term (more than five days) suspension from school – Principal, Superintendent, Board
15. Permanent suspension from school – Superintendent, Board.

B. Procedures

The amount of due process a student is entitled to receive before a consequence is imposed depends on the consequence being imposed. In all cases, regardless of the consequence imposed, the school personnel authorized to impose the consequence must inform the student of the alleged misconduct and must investigate, to the extent necessary, the facts surrounding the alleged misconduct. All students will have an opportunity to present their version of the facts to the school personnel imposing the disciplinary consequence in connection with the imposition of the consequence.

Students who are to be given penalties other than an oral warning, written warning or written notification to their parent(s) are entitled to additional rights before the consequence is imposed. These additional rights are explained below.

1. Detention

Instructional staff, Principals and the Superintendent may use detention as a consequence for student misconduct in situations where removal from the classroom or suspension would be inappropriate. Parents will receive notification of detentions assigned. Students will be provided appropriate transportation home following detention.

2. Suspension from Transportation

If a student does not conduct himself/herself properly on a bus, the bus driver is expected to bring, in writing, such misconduct to the Principal's attention. Students who become a serious disciplinary problem may have their riding privileges suspended by the Principal or the Superintendent or their designees.

In such cases, the student's parent(s) will become responsible for seeing that their child gets to and from school safely. Should the suspension from transportation amount to a suspension from attendance, the District will make appropriate arrangements to provide for the student's education.

A student subjected to a suspension from transportation is not entitled to a full hearing pursuant to Education Law §3214. However, the student and the student's parent(s) will be provided with a reasonable opportunity for

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an informal conference with the Principal or the Principal's designee to discuss the conduct and the consequence involved.

3. **Suspension from athletic participation, extra-curricular activities and other privileges**

A student subjected to a suspension from athletic participation, extra-curricular activities or other privileges is not entitled to a full hearing pursuant to Education Law §3214. However, the student and the student's parent(s) will be provided with a reasonable opportunity for an informal conference with the District official imposing the suspension to discuss the conduct and the consequence involved.

4. **In-School Suspension**

The Board recognizes the school must balance the need of students to attend school and the need for order in the classroom to establish an environment conducive to learning. As such, the Board authorizes Principals and the Superintendent to place students who would otherwise be suspended from school as the result of a code of conduct violation in "in-school suspension."

A student subjected to an in-school suspension is not entitled to a full hearing pursuant to Education Law §3214. However, the student and the student's parent(s) will be provided with a reasonable opportunity for an informal conference with the District official imposing the in-school suspension to discuss the conduct and the consequence involved.

5. **Instructional staff Disciplinary Removal of Disruptive Students**

A student's behavior can affect a instructional staff's ability to teach and can make it difficult for other students in the classroom to learn. In most instances the classroom instructional staff can control a student's behavior and maintain or restore control over the classroom by using good classroom management techniques. These techniques may include practices that involve the instructional staff directing a student to briefly leave the classroom to give the student an opportunity to regain their composure and self-control in an alternative setting. Such practices may include, but are not limited to:

(1) short-term "time out" in an elementary classroom or in an administrator's office; (2) sending a student to the Principal's Office for the remainder of the class time only; or (3) sending a student to a school counselor or other District staff member for counseling. Time-honored classroom management techniques such as these do not constitute disciplinary removals for purposes of this code.

On occasion, a student's behavior may become disruptive. For purposes

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of this Code of Conduct, a disruptive student is a student who is substantially disruptive of the educational process or substantially interferes with the instructional staff's authority over the classroom. A substantial disruption of the educational process or substantial interference with a instructional staff's authority occurs when a student demonstrates a persistent unwillingness to comply with the instructional staff's instructions or repeatedly violates the instructional staff's classroom behavior rules.

A classroom instructional staff may remove a disruptive student from an academic class for up to three days. The removal from class applies to the class of the removing instructional staff only. For elementary classroom it applies to the specific academic class.

If the disruptive student does not pose a danger or ongoing threat of disruption to the educational process, the instructional staff must provide the student with an explanation for why he/she is being removed and an opportunity to explain their version of the relevant events before the student is removed. Only after the informal discussion may a instructional staff remove a student from class.

If the student poses a danger or ongoing threat of disruption, the instructional staff may order the student to be removed immediately. The instructional staff must, however, explain to the student why he/she was removed from the classroom and give the student a chance to present his or her version of the relevant events within 24-hours.

The instructional staff must complete a District-established disciplinary removal form in the Student Information System and meet with the Principal or their designee as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the school day, to explain the circumstances of the removal and to present the removal form. If the Principal or designee is not available by the end of the same school day, the instructional staff must meet with the Principal or designee prior to the beginning of classes on the next school day.

Within 24 hours after the student's removal, the Principal or another District administrator designated by the Principal must notify the student's parent(s), in writing, that the student has been removed from class and why. The notice must also inform the parent(s) that he or she has the right, upon request, to meet informally with the Principal or the Principal's designee to discuss the reasons for the removal.

Notice should be provided by telephone with a formal written notice to follow in a timely fashion. The instructional staff who ordered the removal will be required to attend the informal conference.

If at the informal meeting the student denies the charges, the Principal, the Principal's designee, or the instructional staff who orders the removal, must

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explain why the student was removed and give the student and the student's parents a chance to present the student's version of the relevant events. The informal meeting must be held within 24 hours of the student's removal. The timing of the informal meeting may be extended by mutual agreement of the parent(s) and Principal.

The Principal or the Principal's designee may overturn the removal of the student from class if the Principal finds any one of the following:

1. The charges against the student are not supported by substantial evidence.
2. The student's removal is otherwise in violation of law, including the District's code of conduct.
3. The conduct warrants suspension from school pursuant to Education Law §3214 and a suspension will be imposed.

The Principal or their designee may overturn a removal at any point between receiving the referral form issued by the instructional staff and the close of business on the day following the 24-hour period for the informal conference, if a conference is requested. No student removed from the classroom by the classroom instructional staff will be permitted to return to the classroom until the Principal makes a final determination, or the period of removal expires, whichever is less.

Any disruptive student removed from the classroom by the classroom instructional staff shall be offered continued educational programming and activities until he or she is permitted to return to the classroom.

The District maintains an electronic database for all cases of removal of students from class.

Removal of a student with a disability, under certain circumstances, may constitute a change in the student's placement. Accordingly, no instructional staff may remove a student with a disability from their class until he/she has verified with the Principal or the chairperson of the Committee on Special Education that the removal will not violate the student's rights under state or federal law or regulation.

In light of this information, it appears that a instructional staff may remove a disruptive student with a disability from the classroom under the following scenarios, so long as the removal would not constitute a change in placement.

- A student with a disability does not have a behavior intervention plan or IEP that includes specific strategies to address a student's behavior precipitating the removal.
- Where a student has a Behavior Intervention Plan or IEP that

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addresses specific behaviors, the plan has been implemented consistently and in good faith, but the plan is not working (that is, the student engages in disruptive behavior even though prescribed behavior or management strategies are being implemented.)

- Where the student has an IEP or Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), but the disruptive behavior precipitating the removal is “new” and of a different character than the behavior addressed in the IEP.
- The student is afforded the opportunity to continue to appropriately progress in the general curriculum.
- The student continues to receive the services specified in their IEP.
- The student continues to participate with non-disabled students to the extent they would have in their current placement.

6. **Suspension from School**

Suspension from school is a severe consequence which may be imposed only upon students who are insubordinate, disorderly, violent or disruptive, or whose conduct otherwise endangers the safety, morale, health or welfare of others.

The Board retains its authority to suspend students, but places primary responsibility for the suspension of students with the Superintendent and the Principals.

Any staff member may recommend to the Principal that a student be suspended. All staff members must immediately report and refer a violent student to the Principal for a violation of the code of conduct. All **recommendations and referrals** shall be made in writing unless the conditions underlying the recommendation or referral warrant immediate attention. In such cases a **written report** is to be prepared as soon as possible by the staff member recommending the suspension.

The Principal, upon receiving a recommendation or referral for suspension or when processing a case for suspension, shall gather the facts relevant to the matter and record them for subsequent presentation, if necessary.

a. Short term (five days or less) Suspension from School

When the Principal (referred to as the "suspending authority") proposes to suspend a student charged with misconduct for five days or less pursuant to Education Law §3214(3), the suspending authority must immediately notify the student orally. If the student denies the misconduct, the suspending authority must provide an explanation of the basis for the proposed suspension. The suspending authority must also notify the

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student's parent(s) in writing that the student may be suspended from school. The written notice must be provided by personal delivery, express or overnight, mail and email delivery, or some other means that is reasonably calculated to assure receipt of the notice within 24 hours of the decision to propose suspension at the last known address for the parent(s). Where possible, notice should also be provided by telephone if the school has been provided with a telephone number(s) for the purpose of contacting the parent(s).

The notice shall provide a description of the charges against the student and the incident for which suspension is proposed and shall inform the parent(s) of the right to request an immediate informal conference with the Principal. Both the notice and informal conference shall be in the dominant language or mode of communication used by the parent(s). At the conference, the parent(s) shall be permitted to ask questions of complaining witnesses under such procedures as the Principal may establish.

The notice and opportunity for an informal conference shall take place before the student is suspended unless the student's presence in school poses a continuing danger to person(s) or property or an ongoing threat of disruption to the academic process. If the student's presence does pose such a danger or threat of disruption, the notice and opportunity for an informal conference shall take place, as soon after the suspension is reasonably practicable.

After the conference, the Principal shall promptly advise the parent(s) in writing of his or her decision. The Principal shall advise the parent(s) that if they are not satisfied with the decision and wish to pursue the matter, they must file a written appeal to the Superintendent within five business days, unless they can show extraordinary circumstances precluding them from doing so. The Superintendent shall issue a written decision regarding the appeal within 10 business days of receiving the appeal. If the parent(s) are not satisfied with the Superintendent's decision, they must file a written appeal to the Board of Education with the District Clerk within 10 business days of the date of the Superintendent's decision, unless they can show extraordinary circumstances precluding them from doing so. Only final decisions of the Board may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education within 30 days of the decision.

b. Long term (more than five days) Suspension from School

When the Superintendent or Principal determines that a suspension for more than five days may be warranted, he/she shall give reasonable notice to the student and the student's parent(s) of their right to a fair hearing. At the hearing the student shall have the right to be represented by counsel, the right to question witnesses against him/her and the right

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to present witnesses and other evidence on their behalf.

The Superintendent shall personally hear and determine the proceeding or may, in his or her discretion, designate a hearing officer to conduct the hearing. The hearing officer shall be authorized to administer oaths and to issue subpoenas in conjunction with the proceeding before him/her. A record of the hearing shall be maintained, but no stenographic transcript shall be required. A tape recording shall be deemed a satisfactory record. The hearing officer shall make findings of fact and recommendations as to the appropriate measure of discipline to the Superintendent. The report of the hearing officer shall be advisory only, and the Superintendent may accept all or any part thereof.

An appeal of the decision of the Superintendent may be made to the Board that will make its decision based solely upon the record before it. All appeals to the Board must be in writing and submitted to the District Clerk within 10 business days of the date of the Superintendent's decision, unless the parent(s) can show that extraordinary circumstances precluded them from doing so. The Board may adopt, in whole or in part, the decision of the Superintendent. Final decisions of the Board may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education within 30 days of the decision.

c. Waivers of Superintendent Hearing

A student and parent(s) may voluntarily and knowingly waive his or her right to a Superintendent's Hearing under Education Law Section 3214. In this regard, the District's Administration is directed to promulgate a regulation to establish the procedures of a waiver and to develop a waiver form that meets the requirements set forth in the Commissioner's decision in *Appeal of McMahan*, 38 Ed. Dept. Rep. 22 (1998).

d. Permanent suspension

Permanent suspension is reserved for extraordinary circumstances such as where a student's conduct poses a life-threatening danger to the safety and well-being of other students, school personnel or any other person lawfully on school property or attending a school function.

C. Minimum Periods of Suspension

1. Students who bring a weapon to school

Any student, other than a student with a disability, found guilty of bringing a weapon onto school property will be subject to suspension from school for at least one calendar year. Before being suspended, the student will have an opportunity for a hearing pursuant to Education Law §3214. The Superintendent has the authority to modify the one-year suspension

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on a case-by-case basis. In deciding whether to modify the consequence, the Superintendent may consider the following:

1. The student's age
2. The student's grade in school
3. The student's prior disciplinary record
4. The Superintendent's belief that other forms of discipline may be more effective
5. Input from parents, instructional staff and/or others
6. Other extenuating circumstances

A student with a disability may be suspended only in accordance with the requirements of state and federal law.

2. Students who commit violent acts other than bringing a weapon to School.

Any student, other than a student with a disability, who is found to have committed a violent act, other than bringing a weapon onto school property, shall be subject to suspension from school for at least five days. If the proposed consequence is the minimum five-day suspension, the student and the student's parent(s) will be given the same notice and opportunity for an informal conference given to all students subject to a short-term suspension. If the proposed consequence exceeds the minimum five-day suspension, the student and the student's parent(s) will be given the same notice and opportunity for a hearing given to all students subject to a long-term suspension. The Superintendent has the authority to modify the minimum five-day suspension on a case-by-case basis. In deciding whether to modify the consequence, the Superintendent may consider the same factors considered in modifying a one-year suspension for possessing a weapon.

3. Students who are repeatedly substantially disruptive of the educational process or who repeatedly substantially interfere with the instructional staff's authority over the classroom.

Any student, other than a student with a disability, who repeatedly is substantially disruptive of the educational process or substantially interferes with the instructional staff's authority over the classroom will be suspended from school for at least five days. For purposes of this code of conduct, "repeatedly is substantially disruptive" means engaging in conduct that results in the student being removed from the classroom by instructional staff(s) pursuant to Education Law § 3214 (3-a) and this code on four or more occasions during a semester, or three or more occasions during a trimester. If the proposed consequence is the minimum five-day suspension, the student and the student's parent(s) will be given the same notice and opportunity for an informal conference given to all students subject to a short-term suspension. If the proposed consequence exceeds

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the minimum five-day suspension, the student and the student's parent(s) will be given the same notice and opportunity for a hearing given to all students subject to a long-term suspension. The Superintendent has the authority to modify the minimum five-day suspension on a case-by-case basis. In deciding whether to modify the consequence, the Superintendent may consider the same factors considered in modifying a one-year suspension for possessing a weapon.

D. Referrals**1. Counseling**

The Guidance Office shall handle all referrals of students to counseling.

2. PINS Petitions

The District may file a PINS (person in need of supervision) petition in Family Court on any student under the age of 18 who demonstrates that he/she requires supervision and treatment by:

- a. Being habitually truant and not attending school as required by part one of Article 65 of the Education Law.
- b. Engaging in an ongoing or continual course of conduct which makes the student ungovernable, or habitually disobedient and beyond the lawful control of the school.

3. Juvenile Delinquents and Juvenile Offenders

The Superintendent is required to refer the following students to the County Attorney for a juvenile delinquency proceeding before the Family Court:

- a. Any student under the age of 16 years old (17 years old effective October 1, 2018) who is found to have brought a weapon to school, and
- b. Any student 14 or 15 years who qualifies for juvenile offender status under the Criminal Procedure Law § 1.20 (42).

The Superintendent is required to refer students age 16 old (17 years old effective October 1, 2018) and older or any student 14 or 15 years old who qualifies for juvenile offender status to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

E. Prohibition of Corporal Punishment

1. The District recognizes the responsibility of all school personnel, including administrators, faculty and other employees, to see that proper standards of school behavior are maintained. All school

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personnel are expected to help in maintaining proper levels of supervision.

2. No instructional staff, administrator, officer, employee or agent of the District shall use corporal punishment against a student.
3. As used in this section, corporal punishment means any act of physical force upon a student for the purpose of punishing that student, except as otherwise provided in subdivision 4 of this section.
4. In situations in which alternative procedures and methods not involving the use of physical force cannot reasonably be employed, nothing contained in this section shall be construed to prohibit the use of reasonable physical force for the following purposes:
 - a. To protect oneself from physical injury;
 - b. To protect another student or instructional staff or any other person from physical injury;
 - c. To protect the property of the school or others; or
 - d. To restrain or remove a student whose behavior is interfering with the orderly exercise and performance of School District functions, powers and duties, if that student has refused to comply with a request to refrain from further disruptive acts.
5. The Superintendent of Schools is hereby directed to develop and implement a reporting procedure which will enable the District to summarize complaints relative to the alleged administration of corporal punishment. Such summaries will include references to the substance of each/all complaints, the result(s) of the investigation of each/all complaints, and whatever action(s), if any, was/were taken by the administration of the District. The summary of each/all complaints shall be available for submission to the Commissioner of Education in accordance with Commissioner's Regulations (semi-annually, by January 15th and July 15th of each year).

X. ALTERNATIVE INSTRUCTION

When a student of any age is removed from class by a instructional staff, 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 as set forth in 8 NYCRR 100.22."

XI. DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Board recognizes that it may be necessary to suspend, remove or otherwise discipline students with disabilities to address disruptive or problem behavior. The Board also recognizes that students with disabilities in any classification have certain

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procedural protections whenever school authorities intend to impose discipline upon them. The Board is committed to ensuring that the procedures followed for suspending, removing or otherwise disciplining students with disabilities are consistent with the procedural safeguards required by applicable laws and regulations.

This code of conduct affords students with disabilities subject to disciplinary action no greater or lesser rights than those expressly afforded by applicable federal and state law and regulations.

A. Authorized Suspensions or Removals of Students with Disabilities

1. For purposes of this section of the code of conduct, the following definitions apply.

A "suspension" means a suspension pursuant to Education Law § 3214.

A "removal" means a removal for disciplinary reasons from the student's current educational placement other than a suspension and change in placement to an Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES) ordered by an impartial hearing officer because the student poses a risk of harm to himself/herself or others.

An "IAES" means a temporary educational placement for a period of up to 45 days, other than the student's current placement at the time the behavior precipitating the IAES placement occurred. Such placement enables the student to continue to progress in the general curriculum. In another setting, in order to continue to receive services and modifications, including those described on the student's current individualized education program (IEP). This will enable the student to meet the goals set out in their IEP. Including services and modifications to address the behavior which precipitated the IAES placement that are designed to prevent the behavior from recurring.

2. School personnel may order the suspension or removal of a student with a disability from their current educational placement as follows:
 - a. The Board, Superintendent or a Principal may order the placement of a student with a disability into an IAES, another setting or suspension for a period not to exceed five consecutive school days and not to exceed the amount of time a non-disabled student would be subject to suspension for the same behavior.
 - b. The Superintendent may order the placement of a student with a disability into an IAES, another setting or suspension for up to 10 consecutive school days, inclusive of any period in which the student has been suspended or removed under subparagraph (a) above for the same behavior, if the Superintendent determines that the student has engaged in behavior that warrants a suspension and

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- the suspension or removal does not exceed the amount of time non-disabled students would be subject to suspension for the same behavior.
- c. The Superintendent may order additional suspensions of not more than 10 consecutive school days in the same school year for separate incidents of misconduct, as long as those removals do not constitute a change of placement.
 - d. The Superintendent may order the placement of a student with a disability in an IAES to be determined by the Committee on Special Education (CSE), for the same amount of time that a student without a disability would be subject to discipline, but not more than 45 days, if the student carries or possesses a weapon to school or to a school function, or the student knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function or the student causes bodily injury to another person at school, on school premises or at a school function.
 - (1) "Weapon" means the same as "dangerous weapon" under U.S.C. §930(g)(2) which includes "a weapon, device, instrument, material or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of causing death or serious bodily injury, except...[for] a pocket knife with a blade of less than 2 1/2 inches in length."
 - (2) "Controlled substance" means a drug or other substance identified in certain provisions of the federal Controlled Substances Act specified in both federal and state law and regulations applicable to this policy.
 - (3) "Illegal drugs" means a controlled substance except for those legally possessed or used under the supervision of a licensed health-care professional or that is legally possessed or used under any other authority under the Controlled Substances Act or any other federal law.
3. Subject to specified conditions required by both federal and state law and regulations, an impartial hearing officer may order the placement of a student with a disability in an IAES setting for up to 45 days at a time, if maintaining the student in his or her current educational placement poses a risk of harm to the student or others.

B. Change of Placement Rule

1. A disciplinary change in placement means a suspension or removal from a student's current educational placement that is either:
 - a. for more than 10 consecutive school days; or
 - b. for a period of 10 consecutive school days or less if the student is

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subjected to a series of suspensions or removals that constitute a pattern because they cumulate to more than 10 school days in a school year and because of such factors as the length of each suspension or removal, the total amount of time the student is removed and the proximity of the suspensions or removals to one another.

2. School personnel may not suspend or remove a student with disabilities if imposition of the suspension or removal would result in a disciplinary change in placement based on a pattern of suspension or removal. However, the District may impose a suspension or removal, which would otherwise result in a disciplinary change in placement, based on a pattern of suspensions or removals if the CSE has determined that the behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability, or the student is placed in an IAES for behavior involving weapons, illegal drugs or controlled substances, or infliction of bodily injury.

C. Special Rules Regarding the Suspension or Removal of Students with Disabilities

1. The District's Committee on Special Education (CSE) shall:
 - a. Conduct functional behavioral assessments to determine why a student engages in a particular behavior and develop or review behavioral intervention plans whenever the District is first suspending or removing a student with a disability for more than 10 school days in a school year or imposing a suspension or removal that constitutes a disciplinary change in placement, including a change in placement to an IAES for misconduct involving weapons, illegal drugs or controlled substances.

If subsequently, a student with a disability who has a behavioral intervention plan and has been suspended or removed from their current educational placement for more than 10 school days in a school year, is subjected to a suspension or removal that does not constitute a disciplinary change in placement, members of the CSE shall review the behavioral intervention plan and its implementation to determine if modifications are necessary.

If one or more members of the CSE believe modifications are needed, the school district shall convene a meeting of the CSE to modify such plan and its implementation, to the extent the committee determines necessary.

- b. Conduct a manifestation determination review of the relationship between the student's disability and the behavior subject to disciplinary action whenever a decision is made to place a student in an IAES either for misconduct involving weapons, illegal drugs or controlled substances or because maintaining the student in his

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current educational setting poses a risk of harm to the student or others; or a decision is made to impose a suspension that constitutes a disciplinary change in placement.

2. The parent(s) of a student who is facing disciplinary action, but who has not been determined to be eligible for services under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Article 89 at the time of misconduct, shall have the right to invoke applicable procedural safeguards set forth in federal and state law and regulations if, in accordance with federal and state statutory and regulatory criteria, the school district is deemed to have had knowledge that their child was a student with a disability before the behavior precipitating disciplinary action occurred. If the District is deemed to have had such knowledge, the student will be considered a student presumed to have a disability for discipline purposes.
 - a. The Superintendent, Principal or other school official imposing a suspension or removal shall be responsible for determining whether the student is a student presumed to have a disability.
 - b. A student will not be considered a student presumed to have a disability for discipline purposes if, upon receipt of information supporting a claim that the District had knowledge the student was a student with a disability, the District either:
 - (1) conducted an individual evaluation and determined that the student is not a student with a disability, or
 - (2) determined that an evaluation was not necessary and provided notice to the parent(s) of such determination, in the manner required by applicable law and regulations.

If there is no basis for knowledge that the student is a student with a disability prior to taking disciplinary measures against the student, the student may be subjected to the same disciplinary measures as any other non-disabled student who engaged in comparable behaviors.

However, if a request for an individual evaluation is made while such non-disabled student is subjected to a disciplinary removal, an expedited evaluation shall be conducted and completed in the manner prescribed by applicable federal and state law and regulations. Until the expedited evaluation is completed, the non-disabled student who is not a student presumed to have a disability for discipline purposes shall remain in the educational placement determined by the District, which can include suspension.

3. The District shall provide parents with notice of disciplinary removal no later than the date on which a decision is made to change the placement of

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a student with a disability to an IAES for either misconduct involving weapons, illegal drugs or controlled substances or because maintaining the student in their current educational setting poses a risk of harm to the student or others; or a decision is made to impose a suspension or removal that constitutes a disciplinary change in placement.

4. The procedural safeguards notice prescribed by the Commissioner shall accompany the notice of disciplinary removal. The parents of a student with disabilities subject to a suspension of five consecutive school days or less shall be provided with the same opportunity for an informal conference available to parents of non-disabled students under the Education Law.
5. Superintendent hearings on disciplinary charges against students with disabilities subject to a suspension of more than five school days shall be bifurcated into a guilt phase and a penalty phase in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Commissioner's regulations incorporated into this code.
6. The removal of a student with disabilities other than a suspension or placement in an IAES shall be conducted in accordance with the due process procedures applicable to such removals of non-disabled students, except that school personnel may not impose such removal for more than 10 consecutive days or for a period that would result in a disciplinary change in placement, unless the CSE has determined that the behavior is not a manifestation of the student's disability.
7. During any period of suspension or removal, including placement in an IAES, students with disabilities shall be provided services as required by the Commissioner's regulations incorporated into this code.

D. Expedited Due Process Hearings

1. An expedited due process hearing shall be conducted in the manner specified by the Commissioner's' regulations incorporated into this code, if:
 - a. The District requests such a hearing to obtain an order of an impartial hearing officer placing a student with a disability in an IAES where school personnel maintain that it is dangerous for the student to be in their current educational placement, or during the pendency of due process hearings where school personnel maintain that it is dangerous for the student to be in current educational placement during such proceedings.
 - b. The parent(s) requests such a hearing from a determination that the student's behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability, or relating to any decision regarding placement,

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including but not limited to any decision to place the student in an IAES.

- (1) During the pendency of an expedited due process hearing or appeal regarding the placement of a student in an IAES for behavior involving weapons, illegal drugs or controlled substances, or on grounds of dangerousness, or regarding a determination that the behavior is not a manifestation of the student's disability for a student who has been placed in an IAES, the student shall remain in the IAES pending the decision of the impartial hearing officer or until expiration of the IAES placement, whichever occurs first, unless the parents and the District agree otherwise.
 - (2) If school personnel propose to change the student's placement after expiration of an IAES placement, during the pendency of any proceeding to challenge the proposed change in placement, the student shall remain in the placement prior to removal to the IAES, except where the student is again placed in an IAES.
2. An expedited due process hearing shall be completed within 15 business days of receipt of the request for a hearing. Although the impartial hearing officer may grant specific extensions of such time period, he or she must mail a written decision to the District and the parents within five business days after the last hearing date, and in no event later than 45 calendar days after receipt of the request for a hearing, without exceptions or extensions.

E. Referral to law enforcement and judicial authorities

In accordance with the provisions of IDEA and its implementing regulations:

1. The District may report a crime committed by a child with a disability to appropriate authorities, and such action will not constitute a change of the student's placement.
2. The Superintendent shall ensure that copies of the special education and disciplinary records of a student with disabilities are transmitted for consideration to the appropriate authorities to whom a crime is reported.

XII. VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

The Board encourages parent(s) and other district citizens to visit the District's schools and classrooms to observe the work of students, instructional staff and other staff. Since schools are a place of work and learning, however, certain limits must be set for such visits. The Principal or their designee is responsible for all persons in the building and on the grounds. For these reasons, the following rules apply to visitors to the schools:

1. Anyone who is not a regular staff member or student of the school will be

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- considered a visitor.
2. All visitors to the school must report to the office of the Principal upon arrival at the school. There they will be required to sign the visitor's register 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 to the office and sign out the identification badge to the Principal's office before leaving the building.
 3. Visitors attending school functions that are open to the public during non-school hours, such as parent-instructional staff organization meetings or public gatherings, are not required to register.
 4. 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 instructional staff(s), so that class disruption is kept to a minimum.
 5. Instructional staff are expected not to take class time to discuss individual matters with visitors.
 6. Any unauthorized person on school property will be reported to the Principal or his or her designee. Unauthorized persons will be asked to leave. The police may be called if the situation warrants.
 7. All visitors are expected to abide by the rules for public conduct on school property contained in this code of conduct.

XIII. In-Service Education Programs

At the start of each school year, the District shall provide all staff with in-service education regarding District policy for conduct on school grounds and at school functions, methods for promoting a safe and supportive school environment and climate, and ways of discouraging discrimination and/or harassment against students by other students or school employees.

XIV. Public Conduct on School Property

The District is committed to providing an orderly, respectful environment that is conducive to learning. To create and maintain this kind of an environment, it is necessary to regulate public conduct on school property and at school functions. For purposes of this section of the code, "public" shall mean all persons when on school property or attending a school function including students, instructional staff and district personnel.

The restrictions on public conduct on school property and at school functions contained in this code are not intended to limit freedom of speech or peaceful assembly. The District recognizes that free inquiry and free expression are indispensable to the objectives of the District. The purpose of this code is to maintain public order and prevent abuse of the rights of others.

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

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property.

A. Prohibited Conduct

No person, either alone or with others, shall:

1. Intentionally injure any person or threaten to do so.
2. Intentionally damage or destroy school district property or the personal property of a instructional staff, administrator, other district employee or any person lawfully on school property, including graffiti or arson.
3. Disrupt the orderly conduct of classes, school programs or other school activities.
4. 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.
5. Intimidate, harass or discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, creed, body type, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability.
6. Enter any portion of the school premises without authorization or remain in any building or facility after it is normally closed.
7. Obstruct the free movement of any person in any place to which this code applies.
8. Violate the traffic laws, parking regulations or other restrictions on vehicles.
9. Possess, consume, sell, distribute or exchange alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, or be under the influence of either on school property or at a school function.
10. Use tobacco, nicotine or e-cigarette products on school property or at a school function.
11. Possess or use weapons on school property or at a school function, except in the case of law enforcement officers or except as specifically authorized by the school district.
12. Loiter on or about school property.
13. Gamble on school property or at school functions.
14. Refuse to comply with any reasonable order of identifiable school district officials performing their duties.
15. Willfully incite others to commit any of the acts prohibited by this Code.
16. Violate any federal or state statute, local ordinance or Board policy while on school property or while at a school function.

B. Penalties

Persons who violate this code shall be subject to the following penalties:

1. Visitors. Their authorization, if any, to remain on school grounds or at the school function shall be withdrawn and they shall be directed to leave the premises. If they refuse to leave, they shall be subject to ejection.

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2. Students. They shall be subject to disciplinary action as the facts may warrant, in accordance with the due process requirements.
3. Tenured faculty members. They shall be subject to disciplinary action as the facts may warrant in accordance with Education Law §3020-a or any other legal rights that they may have.
4. Staff members in the classified service of the civil service entitled to the protection of Civil Service Law §75. They shall be subject to immediate ejection and to disciplinary action as the facts may warrant in accordance with Civil Service Law §75 or any other legal rights that they may have.
5. Staff members other than those described in subdivisions 4 and 5. They shall be subject to warning, reprimand, suspension or dismissal as the facts may warrant in accordance with any legal rights they may have.

C. Enforcement

The Principal or their designee shall be responsible for enforcing the conduct required by this Code of Conduct.

When the Principal or his or her designee sees an individual engaged in prohibited conduct, which in their judgment does not pose any immediate threat of injury to persons or property, the Principal or designee shall tell the individual that the conduct is prohibited and attempt to persuade the individual to stop. The Principal or designee shall also warn the individual of the consequences for failing to stop. If the person refuses to stop engaging in the prohibited conduct, or if the person's conduct poses an immediate threat of injury to persons or property, the Principal or designee shall have the individual removed immediately from school property or the school function. If necessary, local law enforcement authorities will be contacted to assist in removing the person.

The District shall initiate disciplinary action against any student or staff member, as appropriate, with the "Penalties" section above. In addition, the District reserves its right to pursue a civil or criminal legal action against any person violating the Code of Conduct.

XV. DISSEMINATION AND REVIEW**A. Dissemination of Code of Conduct**

The Board of Education shall ensure community awareness of these provisions and of the Code of Conduct by:

1. Posting the complete Code of Conduct, respectively, on the District's Internet Website, including any annual updates or amendments thereto.
2. Provide copies of a summary of the Code of Conduct to all students, in an age-appropriate version, written in plain language, at a school assembly to be held at the beginning of each school year.
3. Provide by mail a plain language summary of the Code of Conduct to all

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- persons in a parental relation to the students before the beginning of each school year and making the summary available thereafter upon request.
4. Provide each existing instructional staff with a copy of the complete Code of Conduct and a copy of any amendments to the Code of Conduct as soon as practicable following initial adoption or amendment of the Code of Conduct and providing new instructional staff with a complete copy of the current Code of Conduct upon their employment.
 5. Make complete copies of the Code of Conduct available for review by students, parents or persons in parental relation to students, other school staff, and community members.
 6. Provide training to instructional staff, administrators, and staff designed to address the concepts and issues incorporated in the Dignity Act, including, but not limited to, guidelines on promoting a safe and supportive school climate while discouraging, among other things, discrimination or harassment against students and/or school employees.
 7. Provide “safe and supportive school climate concepts” in the District curriculum.

The District shall develop and implement a program of instruction in grades Kindergarten through Grade 12 that supports development of a school environment free of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination, that raises student and staff awareness and sensitivity to harassment, bullying and /or discrimination, that instructs in the safe and responsible use of the internet and electronic communications and that includes a component on civility, citizenship and character education in accordance with Education Law. Such component shall instruct students on the principles of honesty, tolerance, personal responsibility, respect for others, observance of laws and rules, courtesy, dignity and other traits which will enhance the quality of their experiences in, and contributions to, the community.

The Board will sponsor an in-service education program for all district staff members to ensure the effective implementation of the Code of Conduct. The Superintendent may solicit the recommendations of the district staff, particularly instructional staff and administrators, regarding in-service programs pertaining to the management and discipline of students.

B. Review of Code of Conduct

The Board may appoint an advisory committee to assist in reviewing the code and the district's response to code of conduct violations. The committee will be made up of representatives of student, instructional staff, administrator, and parent organizations, school safety personnel and other school personnel.

Before adopting any revisions to the Code of Conduct, the Board will hold at least one public hearing at which school personnel, parents, students and any other interested party may participate.

POLICY

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

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The Code of Conduct and any amendments to it will be filed with the Commissioner of Education no later than 30 days after adoption.

Watertown City School District

Legal Ref: Education Law §2801; 8 NYCRR100.2

Adopted: 6/1/02, 08/01/02

Revised: 08/21/12, 07/19/13, 08/23/16, 07/05/17, 11/06/18, 11/03/2020, 09/07/21, 08/30/22
8/1/2023, 8/20/2024