Board Approved 8/24/2021

Methacton SCHOOL DISTRICT

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Methacton Mission, Vision, and Core Values

Mission

The Methacton School District is an exemplary student-focused and community-centered environment that prepares learners to meet the demands of our evolving world.

Vision

The Methacton School District will empower all learners to develop talents, encourage personal growth and success, and inspire leadership to transform our future.

Core Values

M otivate to succeed
E mpower all learners
T rust in teamwork
H onor our heritage
A ppreciate our diversity
C ommit to growth
T ransform our future
O pen new opportunities
N urture our talents

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

It is the policy of the Methacton School District to provide equal opportunity in all its programs and activities and in its employment practices. No pupil, employee, or other person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subject to discrimination in regard to any District program on the grounds of race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, genetic information, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy or handicap/disability. Every member of the school community is entitled to attend school free from a hostile or abusive environment. Harassment and intimidation will not be tolerated and should be reported in accordance with Board Policy 103, Nondiscrimination in School and Classroom Practices.

For additional information, please contact the Human Resources Office at 610-489-5000.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Students

Students attend and participate in the school program so that they may develop to their fullest potential. With this in mind, pupils are to:

- Display an enthusiastic and supportive attitude toward school and education.
- Make an effort to do their best work.
- Attend school and be on-time regularly.
- Accept responsibility for their actions.
- Respect self, the rights and differences of others, and the right for all to secure an education in an orderly environment.
- Contribute toward maintaining an atmosphere of mutual respect and dignity for all by obeying school rules and regulations.
- Maintain habits of personal cleanliness.
- Respect school property and help to keep it free from damage.
- Recognize that the school staff assumes the role of a surrogate parent in matters of behavior and discipline from time of departure from home until arrival at home as well as during any school sponsored activities.
- Not knowingly possess, handle, or transmit any object that is or can reasonably be considered a weapon on school premises, at any school-sponsored activity, or on any provided transportation to or from a school-sponsored activity.

Staff

The staff recognizes their charge in educating the children of the community. To meet this responsibility they are to:

- Plan and conduct a program of instruction that will make learning attractive and interesting.
- Establish professional and cooperative relationships with pupils, parents/guardians, staff, and administrators that promotes the mission of the district.
- Promote a climate of mutual respect and dignity that will strengthen the pupils' positive self-image.
- Recognize and address when student misconduct could be rooted in discrimination or intimidation/retaliation and complete required reporting forms.
- Guide pupils to attain their full potential.
- Teach common courtesies by example.
- Communicate regularly with pupils, parents/guardians, staff, and administrators to promote student success.
- Recognize that some disciplinary problems may result from student academic, social, or emotional frustration or challenges.
- Be cognizant of the needs of pupils while recognizing and reporting negative academic, behavioral or social/emotional concerns.
- Distinguish between minor student misconduct best handled by the staff and major problems requiring the assistance of administration.
- Report to the building administrator any pupils who jeopardize their own safety or the safety of others, or who interfere with the orderly operation of the instructional program or classroom or school.
- Serve as a surrogate parent in matters of behavior and discipline in accordance with Pennsylvania School Code.

Parents/Guardians

A cooperative relationship between home and school is essential to each pupil's successful development and achievement. To achieve this, parents and guardians are urged to:

- Support your child's enthusiastic and supportive attitude toward school and education.
- Support your child's effort to do their best work.
- Insist on prompt and regular attendance.
- Establish cooperative relationships with teachers, administrators, and staff that promotes the mission of the district.
- Provide a place for study and assist your child as needed with their completion of homework.
- Instill upon your child the value of self-respect, respect for others, respect for the law, and respect for public property.
- Cooperate with the school in jointly resolving any school-related matters.
- Encourage your child to take pride in their appearance.
- Inspire your child to participate in school activities.
- Insist that your child promptly bring home all communications from school.
- Assist your child when challenged academically, socially or emotionally and seek assistance from school or community services when appropriate.
- Urge the communication of school matters that support a positive school and community climate.

Building Administration

As the educational leaders of the school, the administration sets the climate. They are to:

- Lead and evaluate a program of instruction in the school to achieve meaningful educational outcomes.
- Develop a sound and healthy atmosphere of mutual respect and order within the school.
- Assist staff in their procedures, growth mindset, and professional responsibilities within their classrooms.
- Ensure that all at-risk pupils receive appropriate services.
- Develop and implement school procedures and district policy to reduce the likelihood of pupil misconduct.
- Provide opportunities for pupils and staff to approach administration in order to remedy grievances.
- Work closely with parents/guardians to establish positive professional relationships between home and school.
- Utilize all appropriate auxiliary staff and community agencies to assist parents/guardians, pupils, and staff in identifying problems and solutions.
- Establish and maintain building security.
- Assume responsibility for the dissemination and enforcement of the District Discipline Code and ensure that all discipline cases are resolved promptly.
- Ensure fairness, reasonableness, and consistency.
- Address, investigate, resolve complaints with emphasis on underlying discrimination and intimidation/retaliation and complete reporting requirements.
- Comply with district policy, state laws, governing hearings, suspensions, and pupils' rights.
- Teach common courtesies by example.

STUDENT RIGHTS

Exclusion from School – Suspension

- The principal or designee may suspend any student for disobedience or misconduct for a period of one (1) to ten (10) consecutive school days and shall report the suspension to the Superintendent as soon as possible.
- No student may be suspended without notice of the reasons for which s/he is suspended and an opportunity to be heard on his/her own behalf before the school official who holds the authority to reinstate the student. Prior notice is not required where it is clear that the health, safety or welfare of the school population is threatened. The parents/guardians and Superintendent shall be notified immediately in writing when a student is suspended.
- When the suspension exceeds three (3) school days, the student and parent/guardian will be given the opportunity for an informal hearing with the designated school official. Such hearing shall take place as soon as possible after the suspension, and the district shall offer to hold it within the first five (5) days of the suspension, and prior to returning to school.
- Informal hearings shall be conducted by the building principal or designee.
- The district shall provide for the student's education during the period of suspension.

Exclusion from Class - In-School Suspension

- No student may receive an in-school suspension without notice of the reasons for which s/he is suspended and an opportunity to respond prior to the time the suspension becomes effective. The parent/guardian shall be informed of the suspension action taken by the school.
- Should the in-school suspension exceed ten (10) consecutive school days, the student and parent/guardian shall be offered an informal hearing with the building principal. Such hearing shall take place prior to the eleventh day of the in-school suspension.
- The district shall provide for the student's education during the period of in-school suspension.

Expulsion

- Expulsion is exclusion from school by the Board for a period exceeding ten (10) school days. The Board may permanently expel from the district rolls any student whose misconduct and disobedience warrants this sanction. No student shall be expelled without an opportunity for a formal hearing before the Board, or a duly authorized committee of the Board and upon action taken by the Board after the hearing.
- A formal hearing shall be required in all expulsion actions.
- The Board requires that each hearing shall be closed to the public unless the student and/or the parent/guardian requests a public hearing.
- A formal hearing shall not be unreasonably delayed and in any event shall be held within fifteen (15) school days of the notification of charges unless mutually agreed to by both parties or delayed for reasons set forth in statute and/or regulation.
- The formal hearing shall observe the due process requirements of:
  1. Notification of the charges in writing by certified mail to the student's parent/ guardian, including a copy of the district's expulsion policy, notice that legal counsel may represent the student and the district's hearing procedures.
  2. At least a three (3) day notice of the time and place of the hearing.
  3. The hearing shall be private unless the student or parent/guardian requests a public hearing.
  4. The right to representation by counsel at the expense of the parent/guardian and the right to have parents/guardians attend the hearing.
  5. Disclosure of the names of witnesses and copies of written statements or affidavits of witnesses.
  6. The right to request such witnesses appear in person and answer questions or be cross-examined.
  7. The right to testify and present witnesses on the student's behalf.
  8. The hearing shall be held with all reasonable speed.
  9. Recording of the proceedings by stenographer or tape recorder.
  10. A copy of the transcript available at the student's expense.
- A written adjudication shall be issued after the Board has acted to expel a student. The adjudication may include additional conditions or sanctions.
- Consequences for misconduct are informed by a need to:
  - discipline students appropriately, and
  - Provide an opportunity for learning from the situation for all involved
  - Provide opportunity for the complainant to feel heard and taken seriously

NOTE: In all cases in which students are excluded from school by the action of a school official, students shall have the responsibility to make-up tests and work missed while being disciplined and shall be permitted to complete these assignments before or after the regular school day.

METHACTON SCHOOL DISTRICT DISCIPLINE CODE - PUPIL MISCONDUCT/DISCIPLINARY RESPONSE STRUCTURE				
	DESCRIPTION OF BEHAVIOR	**EXAMPLES**	**PROCEDURES**	**DISCIPLINARY OPTIONS/RESPONSES**
I.	Misbehavior on the part of the pupil which impedes orderly classroom procedures or interferes with the orderly operation of the school. These misbehaviors can usually be handled by an individual staff member but sometimes require the intervention of other school support personnel.	● Disturbance out of class (hall, cafeteria, yard, etc.) ● Disrespect ● Disruption of learning ● Tardiness ● Abusive language ● Non-defiant failure to complete assignments or carry out directions ● Unprepared for class ● Inappropriate use of a computer or computer network ● Other offenses fitting the definition of LEVEL 1 misconduct ● Dress code violation ● Failure to submit an excuse note	● There is immediate intervention by the staff member who is supervising the pupil or who observes the misbehavior. ● Repeated misbehavior requires a pupil conference with the counselor, teacher, and/or administrator. ● A proper and accurate record of offenses and disciplinary action is maintained by the staff member and, upon written referral to a building administrator, is recorded in the disciplinary files.	● Parent contact ● Verbal reprimand ● Special assignment ● Behavioral contract ● Counseling ● Withdrawal of privileges ● Disciplinary probation ● Strict supervised study ● Teacher detention ● Peer Mediation/Counseling ● Temporary removal from class/activity ● Temporary loss of computer privileges ● Lunch detention ● Office detention
II.	Misbehavior whose FREQUENCY or SERIOUSNESS disrupts the learning climate of the school. These infractions, which usually result from the continuation of LEVEL I or more serious misbehaviors, require the intervention of personnel on the administrative level because the execution of LEVEL I disciplinary options has failed to correct the situation or the behavior rises to a LEVEL II offense. Also included in this level are misbehaviors which	● Repeated LEVEL I behaviors ● Bus disturbance ● Truancy/Repeated tardiness ● Disruptive behavior ● Bullying ● Forging notes or excuses ● Cheating and/or plagiarism ● Cutting class ● Insubordination ● Failure to serve a detention ● Unauthorized leaving of school property ● Inappropriate behavior when traveling between buildings ● Violation of school policy on a student field trip ● Presence in an unauthorized area ● Failure to identify oneself correctly ● Profane or obscene language	● There is immediate intervention by the staff member who is supervising the pupil or who observes the misbehavior. ● The pupil is referred to the administrator for appropriate disciplinary action. ● The administrator or designee meets with the pupil and/or teacher about the pupil's misconduct and the resulting disciplinary action. ● The teacher is informed of the administrator's action. ● A proper and accurate record of the offense and the disciplinary action is maintained by the administrator. ● Parents are informed and involved. ● If a suspension is considered, the pupil	● Any appropriate response from LEVEL I ● Academic and/or co-curricular probation ● Administrative detention ● Loss of bus privileges ● Restriction from field trips ● Schedule change ● Behavior modification plan ● Referral to outside agency ● In-school suspension ● Out-of-school suspension – 1-3

	do not represent a direct threat to the health and safety of others but whose educational consequences are serious enough to require corrective action on the part of administrative personnel.	● Offensive ethnic and/or racial comments ● Unauthorized possession of any electronic device ● Violation of Internet/Acceptable Use Policy ● Possession of pornographic material ● Disruptive behavior at social functions, athletic contests or extra-curricular activities ● Hate speech ● Tobacco use/possession/vaping /associated paraphernalia ● Social media/electronic posts during the school day, or photography of staff or students without their consent. ● Other offenses fitting the definition of LEVEL II misconduct	shall be advised of the reasons for the suspension and be given the opportunity to respond before the suspension becomes effective. ● Pupil is referred to guidance counselor. ● Confiscated items used for tobacco or drug use will not be returned.	

METHACTON SCHOOL DISTRICT DISCIPLINE CODE - PUPIL MISCONDUCT/DISCIPLINARY RESPONSE STRUCTURE				
	DESCRIPTION OF BEHAVIOR	**EXAMPLES**	**PROCEDURES**	**DISCIPLINARY OPTIONS/RESPONSES**
III.	Acts directed against self, persons or property, but whose consequences DO NOT SERIOUSLY ENDANGER the health, safety, and welfare of others in the school or which require referral to law enforcement officials, although, on occasion, these offenses may result in the intervention of law enforcement officers. These acts might be considered criminal, but most frequently can be handled by the disciplinary mechanism in the school. Corrective measures which the school should undertake, however, depend on the extent of the school's resources for remediating the situation in the best interests of all pupils.	● Repeated LEVEL II behaviors ● Fighting ● Vandalism/malicious mischief ● Gambling ● Theft/possession/sale of stolen property ● Violation of any school policy during an extended field trip ● Irresponsible use of motor vehicles ● Harassment ● Direct threatening call, letters, or emails ● Ethnic and/or racial intimidation or hate speech ● Theft of computer hardware or software ● Other offenses violating the Pennsylvania Crimes Code ● Other offensives fitting the definition of LEVEL III misconduct	● There is immediate intervention by the staff member who is supervising the pupil, provided that such intervention can take place safely. ● The administrator initiates disciplinary action by investigating the infraction and conferring with staff on the extent of the consequences. ● The administrator meets with the pupil about the misconduct and the resulting disciplinary action. ● A proper and accurate record of offenses and disciplinary actions is maintained by the administrator. ● Law enforcement officials are contacted, when appropriate. ● There is restitution of property and damages. ● If a suspension is considered, the pupil shall be advised of the reasons for the suspension and given the opportunity to respond before the suspension becomes effective. ● Parents are informed and involved. ● Pupil is referred to guidance counselor.	● Any appropriate response from LEVEL II ● Restriction from extended field trips; student to return home at parent/guardian's expense ● Alternative program ● Out-of-school suspension – 1-10 days ● Referral to law enforcement officials ● Modified day ● Permanent loss of computer privileges

IV.	Acts which result in VIOLENCE to self, persons, or property, or which POSE A DIRECT THREAT to the health, safety, and welfare of others in the school. These acts may involve misconduct which involves the possession, furnishing, use or involvement of any nature with any unauthorized substance in school, on school property, at any school sponsored activity, on any public or private conveyance providing transportation to and from school sponsored activities. These acts are clearly criminal and are so serious that they always require administrative actions which result in the immediate removal of the pupil from school, the intervention of law enforcement authorities, and possible action by the Board of School Directors.	● Repeated LEVEL III behaviors ● Terroristic threats ● Assault/battery ● Vandalism ● Arson ● Harassment ● Violation of weapons policy ● Inappropriately using, furnishing, selling or possessing unauthorized substances ● Bomb threat ● Extortion ● Theft/possession/sale of stolen property ● Use of firecrackers, smoke bombs, etc. ● Other offenses violating the Pennsylvania Crimes Code ● Other criminal offenses	● There is immediate intervention by the staff member who is supervising the pupil or who observes the misconduct, provided such intervention can take place safely. ● The administrator verifies the offense, confers with the staff involved, and meets with the pupil. ● The pupil is immediately removed from the school environment. ● If a suspension is considered, the pupil should be advised of the reasons for the suspension and given the opportunity to respond before the suspension becomes effective. ● Referral is made to the Superintendent of Schools. ● Law enforcement officials are contacted. ● A complete and accurate report is submitted to the superintendent for possible board action. ● The pupil is given a full due process hearing before the board, if expulsion is recommended. ● Parents are informed and involved.	● Superintendent ’s exclusion ● Expulsion ● Alternative educational services ● Out-of-school suspension 5-10 days ● Completion of drug/alcohol assessment and compliance with resultant recommendations ● Other board action which results in appropriate placement ● Referral to local law enforcement agency for prosecution

DEFINITIONS

Bullying (from policy 349)

Bullying means an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:[1]

1. Substantially interfering with a student's education.
2. Creating a threatening environment.
3. Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Harassment (from policy 349)

Harassment is any gesture or written, verbal, graphic or physical act (including electronically transmitted acts – i.e. Internet, cell phone, personal digital assistant (PDA), or wireless handheld device) that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic such as race; color; religion; ancestry; national origin; gender; sexual orientation; gender identity and expression; mental, physical, or sensory disability or impairment; or by any other distinguishing characteristic. Such behavior is considered harassment or bullying, whether it takes place on or off school property, at any school-sponsored function, or in a school vehicle.

Discrimination (from policy 103)

Discrimination shall mean to treat individuals differently, or to harass or victimize based on a protected classification including race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, genetic information, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy or handicap/disability.