



Williamson Central School District

4184 Miller Street
Williamson, New York 14589

2025-26 Code of Conduct Question & Answer Document

Summary

This document provides a Question-and-Answer guide to the Williamson Central School District's **2025-26 Code of Conduct**, outlining its purpose, scope, core principles, and behavioral expectations. It emphasizes creating a safe, healthy, orderly, and respectful school environment for all members of the school community, including students, staff, and visitors.

The guide also explains parental involvement, the application of the **Dignity for All Students Act (DASA)**, various levels of disciplinary interventions, and student due process rights, with particular attention to considerations for students with disabilities. Additionally, it highlights the recent review and revision process, incorporates stakeholder feedback, and describes avenues for public engagement, underscoring the district's commitment to consistent enforcement and ongoing community input.

Questions & Answers

1. What is the purpose of the Williamson Central School District Code of Conduct?
The WCSD Code of Conduct serves as a **general guide to good citizenship** and provides tools to help students understand and appreciate behavioral norms within the school culture. Its primary goal is to foster a **safe, healthy, orderly, and civil school environment** where students can receive quality education and district personnel can deliver services without disruption. It also aims to ensure that classrooms and public spaces are safe, civil, and orderly, and to **maximize every school's capacity to promote positive behaviors** while preventing inappropriate ones.
2. Who does the Code of Conduct apply to?

The Code of Conduct applies to **all students (UPK-12), district personnel, parents/guardians, and other visitors** when they are on school property, on a school bus, or attending a school event, activity, or athletic event.

3. What are the core principles guiding this Code of Conduct?

The Code of Conduct is built on several key principles:

- a. **Adults (teachers, administrators, staff, parents, community) have an obligation to help students learn to be good citizens** and lead productive lives by enabling them to discern right from wrong, fostering a desire to do good, encouraging responsibility for actions, and modeling desired behaviors.
- b. Student discipline and support policies must be **implemented in ways that are perceived to be respectful**, protecting the dignity of each individual.
- c. The Code supports a **leveled system of interventions and consequences** to address inappropriate behaviors, with the ultimate goal of teaching positive behaviors and strengthening students' personal, social, and academic efficacy. This system emphasizes both student accountability and behavioral change.
- d. Discipline should help students learn from mistakes, understand why behavior is unacceptable, acknowledge harm, take responsibility, and learn prosocial strategies for the future.
- e. It emphasizes the use of **guided interventions** to correct student misbehavior, especially when it may indicate more serious underlying problems.
- f. Policies must be **perceived as fair, equitable, and differentiated**, acknowledging that students need different levels of support to behave responsibly.
- g. The district is committed to promoting **mutual respect, high-quality professionalism, and transparent accountability** based on trust among all members of the school community.

4. What are the specific goals the Code of Conduct aims to achieve?

The Code of Conduct has several specific goals, including:

- a. Ensuring **safe, civil, and orderly classrooms and public spaces**.
- b. Establishing **school-wide expectations** that all adults and students commit to support and enforce.
- c. **Maximizing the school's capacity to promote positive behaviors** and prevent inappropriate, unacceptable, and unskillful behaviors.

- d. Developing **interventions and consequences that enable students to increase their capacity to self-regulate** and interact positively and responsibly.
 - e. **Reducing the overuse and disproportionate use of in-school and out-of-school suspensions** and school discipline referrals.
5. How are parents/guardians involved in the Code of Conduct?
Parents/guardians are considered "**essential partners**" in fostering a positive school climate and culture. The Code of Conduct serves as a general guide for parents to understand the behaviors expected of their child and how school staff will work with them.

Parents/guardians have the **right to be actively involved in their child's education**, receive timely information about policies, regular reports on academic progress and behavior, and prompt notification of inappropriate behaviors or disciplinary actions [15, 16]. They also have rights regarding **due process procedures** for disciplinary matters and information about support services [17]. Parents/guardians have responsibilities, including [18-22]:

- a. Helping their child understand school rules.
 - b. Collaborating with school staff to reinforce expectations.
 - c. Ensuring their child attends school regularly and on time, and that absences are excused.
 - d. Supporting a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students (in accordance with DASA).
 - e. Informing school officials of changes in the home situation that may affect student conduct.
 - f. Communicating concerns respectfully and in a timely manner.
 - g. Familiarizing themselves with the Code of Conduct.
6. What are the key behavioral expectations outlined in the Code of Conduct?
The Code outlines expectations for **public conduct on school property**, emphasizing an orderly, respectful environment conducive to learning for all persons. Students are expected to behave civilly, respect others' rights, and care for school property.

Specific areas of behavioral expectations include:

- a. **Acceptable Use Policy (AUP):** Guidelines for responsible, ethical, and legal use of district technology, including electronic devices like cell phones, computers, and smartwatches. Use of technology is a **privilege**,

not a right, and unacceptable usage may result in consequences, including revocation of access.

- b. **Appropriate Bus Behaviors:** Students must behave appropriately at bus stops and on buses to ensure safety and avoid distracting the driver, consistent with classroom behavior standards.
 - c. **Attendance:** Regular attendance is a **critical factor in student academic success** and is required by State Education Law from age six. The district works to identify and remove barriers to attendance.
 - d. **Student Dress Code:** The dress code aims to foster a safe and conducive learning environment that inspires character, service, knowledge, and wisdom, and reflects mutual respect. Students must wear clothing that is safe, appropriate, and does not disrupt or interfere with the educational process, covering private areas with opaque fabric, and wearing appropriate footwear. **Building Administrators have final discretion** on all dress code matters.
 - e. **Student Driving Privileges:** Driving to and parking on campus is a **privilege** that requires a valid need, a completed application signed by a parent/guardian, and a parking permit. Students must adhere to safe driving rules and park in designated spaces.
7. What is the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) and how does it apply?
- **The Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) aims to provide all public school students with an environment free from discrimination and harassment, and to foster civility in schools. It protects students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex.**

Bullying, as defined by DASA, includes any behavior that interferes with a child's education and/or well-being, is based on a protected class, is intentionally harmful/hurtful, and involves an imbalance of power. The **CROWN Act**, an amendment to DASA, specifically protects students from discrimination based on hair texture and protective hairstyles.

8. How do I report concerns regarding the Code of Conduct or DASA violations?
- Violations of the Code of Conduct should be **promptly reported to the building principal, the principal's designee, or another designated school official**. All school employees are expected to report incidents as soon as possible, preferably in writing.

For incidents of **harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination (DASA violations)**, you should promptly report the matter to the **building principal, Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC), or another designated school official**. Reports can be made verbally or in writing, including through the district's DASA reporting form available on the school website or in the main/counseling office. **Anonymous reports are accepted and investigated**, but disciplinary action will not be based solely on an anonymous report.

The **District Dignity Act Coordinator is Rachel Liberatore (rliberatore@williamsoncentral.org)**, and each school building also has a DAC.

9. What are the different levels of behavioral intervention and response?

The Code of Conduct uses a **multi-tiered system of disciplinary response**:

- a. **Level 1 – Classroom Responses:** Focuses on universal school-wide and classroom practices that promote positive behaviors and self-discipline. Teachers observe and respond immediately to prevent minor discipline problems from escalating.
- b. **Level 2 – Intervention:** Involves targeted interventions and assigned consequences when a student's behavior warrants a more focused response beyond the immediate classroom situation. This may include in-school suspension.
- c. **Level 3 – Intervention:** Addresses violent or dangerous behaviors that significantly threaten school safety and order, or high-risk/ongoing behavioral concerns. These require intensive, individualized interventions. Examples include threats of harm, physical attacks, weapon possession, or violations of the NYS Penal Code like theft, assault, drug/alcohol offenses, or hazing.
- d. Disciplinary actions are designed to be **fair, impartial, and progressive**, with the focus on helping students develop self-discipline. **Restorative practices** such as restorative conferencing, peer mediation, and conflict resolution will be used when appropriate.

10. What types of disciplinary penalties can be imposed on students?

Students found in violation of the Code of Conduct may face progressive discipline, including penalties imposed by various authorized staff members. These range from **oral warnings, written warnings, and written notifications to parents**, to more severe actions such as:

- a. Suspension from transportation, athletic participation, social/extracurricular activities, or other privileges.

- b. Suspension or revocation of access to district computers and Internet.
 - c. In-school suspension.
 - d. Removal from the classroom by a teacher.
 - e. Short-term (five days or less) suspension from school.
 - f. Long-term (more than five days) suspension from school.
 - g. Permanent suspension from school (a severe penalty reserved for extraordinary circumstances posing a life-threatening danger).
11. What "due process" rights do students have in disciplinary matters?
- The amount of due process depends on the severity of the penalty.
- In all cases, the student must be **informed of the alleged misconduct**, and the school must investigate the facts. Students will have an **opportunity to present their version of the facts** to the school personnel imposing the penalty.
- a. For penalties more severe than an oral warning, written warning, or written parental notification, students are entitled to **additional rights**, which are detailed in the Code of Conduct.
 - b. For **short-term suspensions (5 days or less)**, parents/guardians will be notified in writing and given the right to an **immediate informal conference** with the principal. This conference occurs before the suspension unless the student poses a continuing danger or disruption.
 - c. For **long-term suspensions (more than 5 days)**, the student and parents/guardians are given **reasonable notice of their right to a fair hearing**, where the student has the right to be represented by counsel, question witnesses, and present evidence.

12. How does the Code of Conduct address the discipline of students with disabilities?

The Code recognizes that students with disabilities have **specific procedural protections** under state and federal law regarding discipline. The procedures for suspending or removing students with disabilities are consistent with these safeguards, ensuring **no greater or lesser rights than those expressly afforded by applicable law**. Special rules apply concerning:

- a. The length and type of authorized suspensions or removals.
- b. When a suspension or removal constitutes a "**change of placement**".
- c. The **Committee on Special Education (CSE)**'s responsibility to conduct **functional behavioral assessments (FBAs)** and **manifestation determination reviews (MDRs)** to determine if behavior is related to a student's disability.
- d. **Expedited due process hearings** are available in certain situations related to dangerousness or manifestation determinations.

- e. Students with disabilities are to be **provided services during any period of suspension or removal.**

13. When was the Code of Conduct reviewed and revised?

The district completed the required review and revision process for the Code of Conduct in accordance with NYSED regulations. The Assistant Superintendent facilitated **stakeholder meetings in May and June 2025**, engaging faculty, staff, parents, community members, and students from the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council.

14. When is the public hearing for the revised draft Code of Conduct?

The revised draft Code of Conduct was presented for a **public hearing on August 13th.**

15. How can families provide feedback on the revised draft Code of Conduct?

Following the public hearing, there will be a **30-day public comment period.** Any feedback or suggested changes for consideration should be directed to **Superintendent E. Bridget Ashton** at **bashton@williamsoncentral.org**.

16. What is the timeline for the implementation and final approval of the Code of Conduct?

The draft document will be **implemented at the start of the school year.** The district will consider any recommendations received during the 30-day public comment period before presenting a final version for Board approval.