Regional School Unit 5
Durham · Freeport · Pownal

"To inspire and support every learner by challenging minds, building character, sparking creativity, and nurturing passions."

Tom Gray, Superintendent of Schools
Kelly Wentworth, Director of Finance & Human Resources
Erica Mazzeo, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Elisha Morris, Director of Instructional Support

TO: Colin Cheney, Kara Kaikini, Chris Savaiano

CC: Trevor Bean, Jill Hooper, Principals

FROM: Tom Gray, Superintendent

DATE: January 26, 2026

RE: Policy Meeting – February 5, 2026

The Policy Committee is scheduled to meet on Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 4:15 p.m. via Google Meet at the following link: https://meet.google.com/krs-tpjw-gkh
Or dial: (US) +1 424-341-5980 PIN: 952 807 466#

Agenda:

1. Law Change:
   JIC - Student Code of Conduct

2. Regular Review:
   JEA - Compulsory Attendance

3. Board Request:
   None

SYSTEM-WIDE STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Ethical and responsible student behavior is an essential part of the educational mission of our schools. To that end, the Board has developed this System-Wide Code of Conduct with input from school staff, students, parents and the community. The Code defines our expectations for student behavior and provides the framework for a safe, orderly and respectful learning environment.

~~A.~~ Article 1 - Standards for Ethical and Responsible Behavior

The Code of Conduct is intended to support and encourage students to meet the following state-wide standards for ethical and responsible behavior:

- Respect
- Honesty
- Compassion
- Fairness
- Responsibility
- Courage

~~B.~~ Article 2 - Code of Conduct

All students are expected to comply with the Code of Conduct and all related Board policies and school rules. The Code applies to students:

- on school property,
- while in attendance at school or at any school-sponsored activity, or
- at any time or place that such conduct directly interferes with the operations, discipline or ~~school environment~~ **general welfare of the school.**

~~C.~~ Article 3 - General Behavior Expectations

The following expectations for student behavior are fundamental to a safe, orderly and respectful environment in our schools. Each student should:

1. Be courteous to fellow students, staff and visitors.
2. Respect the rights and privileges of other students and school staff.
3. Obey all Board policies and school rules governing student conduct.
4. Follow directions from school staff.
5. Cooperate with staff in maintaining school safety, order and discipline.
6. Attend school regularly.

7. Meet school standards for **grooming and** dress.

8. Respect the property of others, including school property and facilities.

9. Refrain from cheating or plagiarizing the work of others.

10. Refrain from vulgarity, profanity, obscenity, lewdness, and indecency.

~~D.~~ Article 4 - Discipline

Violations of the Code of Conduct may result in positive and restorative interventions and/or disciplinary action. Administrators have the discretion to tailor discipline to the facts and circumstances of the particular case. Consequences will range from a verbal warning for minor misconduct up to and including expulsion for the most serious offenses.

Limitations on expulsions and out-of-school suspensions for students in grade 5 or below:

- **Students in grade 5 or below may only be expelled for violations of the federal Gun-Free Schools Act, as provided in 20-A MRSA § 1001(9-A). The Superintendent may determine on a case-by-case basis, in writing, that an expulsion is not required;**
- **Students in grade five or below may not receive an out-of-school suspension, except when a student (a) has violated the federal Gun-Free Schools Act or (b) presents an imminent danger of serious physical injury to the student or others, and it is determined that less restrictive interventions would be ineffective.**
- **Any out-of-school suspension of a student in grade five or below can be no longer than three school days.**
- **Recess may not be withheld as a consequence of violating this Code by any student enrolled in grade five or below, except when recess is the only time when restorative interventions can occur.**

Behavior that also violates the law may be referred to law enforcement authorities.

See policies:
JK – Student Discipline
JKB – Detention of Students
JKD – Suspension of Students
JKE – Expulsion of Students
JKF – Disciplinary Removals of Students with Disabilities

~~E.~~ Article 5 - Expectations ~~Related to Policy~~

~~The following lists Board adopted policies related to expectations for student behavior. Students, parents and others should refer to the policies and student handbooks for detailed information about the expectations and consequences.~~

Expectations	Related Policies
Violence and Threats	JICIA Weapons, Violence and School Safety
	JICK Bullying
	EBCC Bomb Threats
Weapons	JICIA Weapons, Violence and School Safety
	JICK Bullying
Hazing	ACAD Hazing
Discrimination and Harassment/Sexual Harassment	AC Non-Discrimination/Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action
	ACAA Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students
Bullying	JICIA Weapons, Violence and School Safety
	JICK Bullying
Drug and Alcohol Use	JICH Drug and Alcohol Use by Students
Tobacco Use and Vaping	ADC Tobacco Use and Possession
Conduct on School Buses	JICC Student Conduct on School Buses
Technology/Internet Use	IJNDB Student Technology, Internet Use, and Internet Safety

F. Athletic/Co-Curricular Activities

Students must follow all RSU No. 5 Board policies and school rules while participating in athletics and co-curricular activities. Students who violate policies and rules may be subject to suspension or removal from the team/activity as well as additional disciplinary action under applicable Board policies and/or school rules.

G. Removal of Disruptive/Violent/Threatening Students

1. Students who are disruptive, violent or threatening death or bodily harm to others may be removed from classrooms, school buses, or other school property when necessary to maintain order and safety. The staff member who orders the student removed should arrange to have the student escorted to the office or other designated location.

2. If a student does not comply with a staff member's order to leave, the staff member will contact an administrator, or, if not available, another trained staff member, who shall respond promptly.

3. Staff members should not use physical force or restraint, except to the minimum extent necessary to protect any person from imminent physical harm. Staff members are not required to take action that puts them at risk of serious injury.

4. The responding administrator will take appropriate action. If the student fails to obey verbal directions, force or restraint may be used only to the minimum extent necessary to protect any person from imminent physical harm or to quell a disturbance. Whenever practicable, law enforcement should be called to restrain or physically remove the non-compliant student. The administrator may invoke the school unit's crisis response plan if appropriate.

H. Special Services

1. **Referral.** In some cases, a student may be referred for a special education evaluation. The school unit has adopted policies and procedures for determining when a student shall be referred for special services.

2. **Review of Individual Educational Plan.** For students with disabilities, the school shall schedule an IEP meeting to review the IEP of a student who has been removed from class when: a) school officials and/or the parent believes the student may present a substantial likelihood of injury to himself/herself or other; b) the class removals are sufficient to constitute a change in the student's special education program; or c) school officials or the parent/guardian believes that the student's behavior may warrant a change in educational programming.

I. Referrals to Law Enforcement Authorities

The Superintendent and administrators have the authority to seek the assistance of law enforcement authorities when there is a substantial threat to the safety of the students, staff, or schools. The Superintendent/administration may also inform law enforcement authorities when they have reason to suspect that a student or staff member may have violated a local, state or federal statute. All serious offenses, as determined by the Superintendent, must be reported to law enforcement authorities.

J. Dissemination of System-Wide Student Code of Conduct

The System-Wide Student Code of Conduct shall be distributed to staff, students and parents through handbooks and/or other means selected by the Superintendent and building administrators.

The following is a summary of the school unit's expectations for student behavior. In many cases, the Board has adopted policies that address these expectations in greater detail. Students, parents and others should refer to the policies and student handbooks for more information about the expectations and consequences. In case of an inconsistency between this Code of Conduct, Board policies and/or school handbooks, Board policies will prevail.

A. Violence and Threats

Students shall not engage in violent or threatening behavior. Prohibited behavior includes fighting, assault and/or battery, taking hostages, threats to commit violence against persons or property, or threats, intimidation, or harassment. Violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, as permitted by law.

See policies:
JICIA – Weapons, Violence and School Safety
EBCC – Bomb Threats

B. Weapons

Students shall not possess or use weapons of any kind (examples include but are not limited to firearms, explosives and knives). Students also shall not use any object, although not necessarily designed to be a weapon, to inflict bodily harm and/or to threaten, intimidate, coerce or harass another person (examples include but are not limited to bats, lighters, tools and toy weapons). Firearms violations will result in expulsion in accordance with state and federal statutes; other weapons violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, as permitted by law.

See policy JICIA – Weapons, Violence and School Safety

C. Hazing

Hazing is prohibited. Maine law defines injurious hazing as "any action or situation, including harassing behavior, that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health of any school personnel or a student enrolled in a public school." No student shall plan, encourage, or engage in such activities in connection with any school program or activity, including extracurricular, co-curricular and athletic activities. Students who engage in hazing activities are subject to suspension, expulsion and/or other appropriate disciplinary measures, as permitted by law.

See policy ACAD – Hazing

D. Discrimination and Harassment/Sexual Harassment

Students should not discriminate against other students on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, national origin or disability. Nor should students harass one another on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, or national origin or disability. Sexual harassment is also prohibited.

Discrimination and harassment are grounds for disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, as permitted by law.

See policies:
AC – Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action
ACAA – Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students
ACAA-R – Student Discrimination/Harassment and Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures

E. Bullying and Cyberbullying

Bullying includes, but is not limited to, a written, oral or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof directed at a student or students that:

(1) Has, or a reasonable person would expect it to have, the effect of: (a) Physically harming a student or damaging a student's property; or (b) Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or damage to the student's property;

(2) Interferes with the rights of a student by: (a) Creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment for the student; or (b) Interfering with the student's academic performance or ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or privileges provided by a school; or

(3) Is based on actual or perceived characteristics or association with persons with these actual or perceived characteristics specified in the policy, and has the effects describe above.

Bullying and cyberbullying is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, as permitted by law.

See policy JICK – Bullying and Cyberbullying

F. Drug and Alcohol Use

Students shall not distribute, possess, use or be under the influence of any alcoholic beverage, drug, look-alike substance, or other prohibited materials and/or substances as described in Board policy. Violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from school, as permitted by law.

See policy JICH – Drug and Alcohol Use by Students

G. Tobacco Use

Students shall not smoke, use, possess, sell, or distribute any tobacco products. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension from school, as permitted by law.

See policy ADC – Tobacco-Free Schools: Use And Possession Of Tobacco And Electronic Smoking Devices

H. Conduct on School Buses

Students must comply with all Board policies and school rules while on school buses. Students who violate these policies and rules on a school bus may have their riding privileges suspended or revoked, and may also be subject to additional disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, depending upon the particular violation, as permitted by law.

See policy JICC – Student Conduct on School Buses

I. Computer/Internet Use

Students may use school computers, networks and Internet services only for educational purposes and other purposes authorized by the school unit. Students shall comply with all policies and rules governing acceptable use. Unacceptable use may result in use restrictions, suspension or cancellation of computer privileges as well as additional disciplinary and/or legal action.

See policy IJNDB – Student Computer and Internet Use
IJNDB-R – Student Computer and Internet Use Rules

J. Co-Curricular Code of Conduct

Students must follow all Board policies and school rules while participating in athletics and extracurricular activities.

Article 6 – Removal of Disruptive/Violent/Threatening Students

1. **Students who are disruptive, violent or threatening death or bodily harm to others may be removed from classrooms, school buses or other school property when necessary to maintain order and safety. The staff member who orders the student removed should arrange to have the student escorted to the office or other designated location.**

2. **If a student does not comply with a staff member's order to leave, the staff member will contact an administrator, or, if not available, another suitable person, who shall respond promptly.**

3. **The responding administrator will take appropriate action.**

4. **Any use of physical restraint or seclusion of students must comply with applicable regulations and Board policy.**

See 20-A MRSA § 4009 – Protection from Liability
See Comprehensive Health and Safety Emergency Management Plan
See MDOE Rule Chapter 33 – Physical Restraint and Seclusion of Students
See JKAA/JKAA-R – Physical Restraint and Seclusion of Students

Article 7 – Special Services

A. Referral

The school unit has adopted policies and procedures for determining when a student shall be referred for special services.

See policies:
IHBAA – Referral and General Education Interventions
IHBAC – Child Find Policy

B. Review of Individual Educational Plan

The school shall schedule an IEP meeting to review the IEP of a student who has been removed from class when: a) school officials and/or the parent believes the student may present a substantial likelihood of injury to themselves or others; b) the class removals are sufficient to constitute a change in the student's special education program; or c) school officials or the parent believes that the student's behavior may warrant a change in educational programming.

See policy JKF – Disciplinary Removals of Students with Disabilities

Article 8 – Referrals to Law Enforcement Authorities

The Superintendent and administrators have the authority to seek the assistance of law enforcement authorities when there is a substantial threat to the safety of the schools, students or staff. The Superintendent/administration may also inform law enforcement authorities when they have reason to suspect that a student or staff member may have violated a local, state or federal statute. Serious offenses, as determined by the Superintendent, must be reported to law enforcement authorities.

See policy KLG – Relations with Law Enforcement Authorities

Article 9 – Dissemination of System-Wide Student Code of Conduct

The System-Wide Student Code of Conduct shall be distributed to staff, students and parents through handbooks and/or other means selected by the Superintendent and building administrators.

Cross Reference: AC – Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action
ACAA – Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students
ACAA - R- Student Discrimination/Harassment and Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures
ACAD – Hazing
ADC – Tobacco Use and Possession
EBCC – Bomb Threats
IHBAA – Referral/Pre-Referral Policy of Students with Disabilities

IHBAC – Child Find
IJNDB – Student Computer and Internet Use
IJNDB - R – Student Technology, Internet Use, and Internet Safety Rules
JICC – Student Conduct on School Buses
JICH – Drug and Alcohol Use by Students
JICIA – Weapons, Violence and School Safety
JICK – Bullying & Cyberbullying
JK – Student Discipline
JKB – Detention of Students
JKD – Suspension of Students
JKE – Expulsion of Students
JKF – Disciplinary Removals of Students with Disabilities
KLG – Relations with Law Enforcement Authorities

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA §§ 254 (11); 1001 (15), (15-A)

Adopted: March 24, 2010
Revised: January 23, 2013
Revised: October 23, 2019
Revised:

COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Compulsory education is essential to the preservation of the rights and liberties of the people and the continued prosperity of our nation. Maintaining regular student attendance is necessary to achieve the goal of an educated citizenry.

1. Compulsory Attendance Ages

Under state law, full-time ~~school~~ attendance **at school** is required of ~~all children from their 6th to their 17th birthday except~~ **every child 6 years of age or older and under age 17, unless they have received a high school diploma or its equivalent.**

Although not required to enroll in school, if a child who is 5 years of age and under age 6 is voluntarily enrolled in a public school and has not formally withdrawn, that child is required to attend school when it is in session.

2. Excusable Absences from School

A person's absence **from school** is excused when the absence is for **one of** the following reasons:

A. Personal illness;
B. An appointment with a health professional that must be made during the regular school day **and the absence has prior approval**;
C. Observance of a recognized religious holiday when the observance is required during the regular school day;
D. A family emergency;
E. A planned absence for a personal or educational purpose ~~that~~ **which** has been approved; **or**
F. Education disruption resulting from homelessness, unplanned psychiatric hospitalization, unplanned hospitalization for a medical emergency, foster care placement, youth development placement or some other out-of-district placement that is not otherwise authorized by ~~either any~~ **an** ~~individual education plan~~ **IEP** or **other education plan or** a Superintendents' ~~student transfer~~ agreement.

~~"Education disruption" does not apply to a student who is out of school for 10 or more consecutive school days as a result of a planned absence for a reason such as a family event or a medical absence for planned hospitalization or recovery.~~

3. Adult Responsibility for School Attendance

~~Parents are responsible for ensuring the school attendance of students who are under 17 years of age. The Board shall work with families in an effort to ensure compliance.~~

Parents or other adults having control of a person of compulsory attendance age are

responsible for ensuring that a student attends school as required by law. The Board expects school administrators and staff to work with families in an effort to ensure compliance.

4. Exceptions to the Compulsory Attendance Requirement

A child may be excused from compulsory attendance at school if they meet the requirements in one of the following sections:

A. ~~A person who~~ **They have** graduate~~s~~**d** from high school before ~~their~~ **that person's** 17th birthday;

B. ~~A person who has all of the following~~ **They have**:

1. Reached the age of 15 years **of age** or completed the 9th grade;

2. **Obtained** ~~P~~**p**ermission to leave school from ~~that person's~~ **their** parent;

3. Been approved by the principal for a suitable program of work and study or training;

4. **Obtained** ~~P~~**p**ermission to leave school from the Board or its designee; and

5. Agreed in writing with that person's parent and the Board or its designee to meet annually until that person's 17th birthday to review that person's educational needs.

~~When the~~ **If a** request to be excused from school has been denied pursuant to this ~~paragraph~~ **section**, the student's parent may appeal to the Commissioner **of Education**; ~~or~~

C. ~~A person who has~~ **They have** matriculated **in** and ~~is~~ **are** attending an accredited, post-secondary, degree-granting institution as a full-time student. An exception to the **compulsory** attendance **law** ~~in public school~~ under this paragraph must be approved by the Commissioner **of Education**.

D. They are enrolled in an online learning program or course.

5. Alternatives to Attendance at Public ~~Day~~ School

A person **age 6 or older and under age 17** shall be excused from attending a public day school if ~~the person~~ **they** obtains equivalent instruction ~~in:~~ as allowed by law. **A person under age 6 is not required to comply with this section.**

Equivalent instruction alternatives are as follows:

A. A private school approved for attendance purposes pursuant to ~~20-A MRSA § 2901~~ **state law and regulations;**

B. A private school recognized by the ~~d~~**D**epartment **of Education** as providing equivalent instruction;

C. A home instruction program that complies with ~~the requirements of 20-A MRSA § 5001-A(3)(A)(4)~~ state law and regulations; ~~or~~

D. Any other manner arranged ~~for~~ by the Board and approved by the Commissioner of Education; or

E. Pursuant to 20-A MRS Sections 5104-A or 8605 (approved alternative education program or adult education program).

~~B. A person may be excused from attendance at a public day school pursuant to 20-A MRSA § 5104-A (other public or private alternative programs) or § 8605 (student attendance in adult education courses).~~

~~**Credit for Attendance at a Private School**~~

A student shall be credited with attendance at a private school **under Paragraphs A or B** only if a **the legally required** certificate ~~showing the name, residence and attendance of the person at the school, signed by the person or persons in charge of the school, has been filed with the school officials of the administrative unit in which the student resides~~ **from the private is filed with the student's school unit.**

~~**Discontinuation of Home Instruction**~~

~~If the home instruction program is discontinued, students of compulsory school age must be enrolled in a public school or an equivalent instruction alternative as provided for by law. The receiving school shall determine the placement of the student. At the secondary level, the principal of the receiving school shall determine the value of the prior educational experience toward meeting the standards of Maine's system of Learning Results.~~

~~Secondary school students 20 years of age or more will only be admitted to the school unit with prior Board approval.~~

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA §§ 5001-A et seq.; ~~5003; 5201~~ **5051 et seq.; 2901; 5104-A; 8605**
Ch. 125 § 8.06 (Maine Dept. of Ed. Rules)

Cross Reference: IHBG - Home Schooling
JFC - Dropout Prevention Student Withdrawal from School
JHB - Truancy

Adopted: July 8, 2009
Reviewed: January 23, 2013
Reviewed: June 13, 2018