

**PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



*Paterson - A Promising Tomorrow  
Together We Can*

## **Code of Student Conduct**

**November 2025**

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## Code of Student Conduct Committee

Nahed Badawy

Dr. Kaara Lydner

Robert Silva

Sham Bacchus

Monique McKay

Fatama Shumi

Deyanira Cartagena

William McDowell

Erica Suazo

Jenny Cepeda

Laurel Olson

Dr. Cicely Warren

Dr. David Cozart, Jr.

Nicole Payne

Antoinette Young

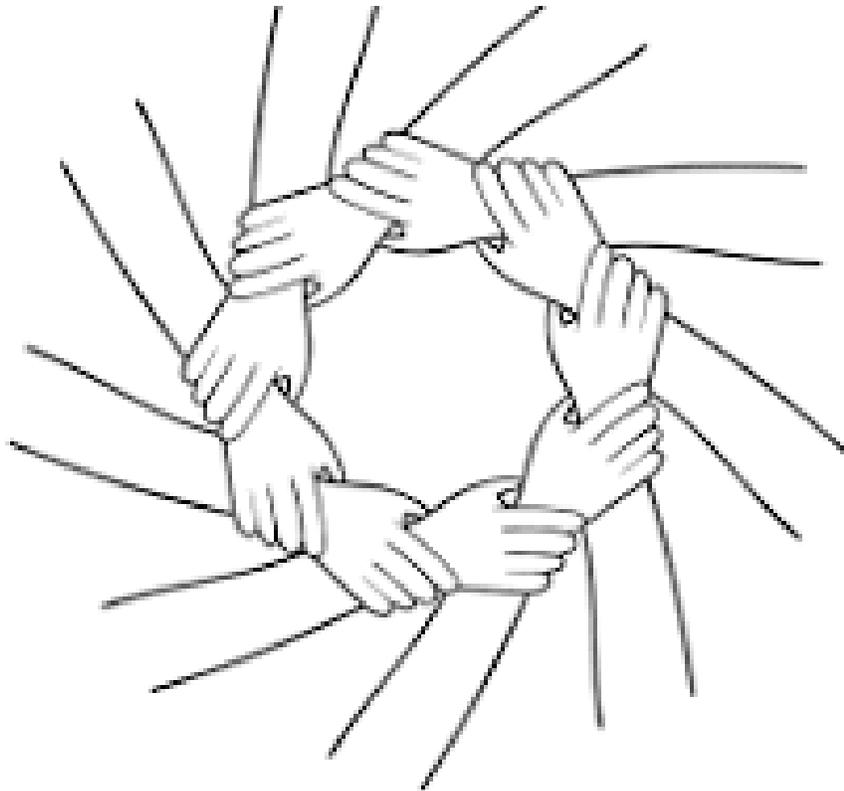
Dr. Melissa Espana

Dalton Price

Boris Zaydel, Esq

Aurelina Jimenez De Reyes

Orlando Robinson



## Board of Education

Our school board is a group of elected officials who are responsible for overseeing the Paterson Public School District. Their main job is to make decisions that help shape the education system in their community. Their key responsibilities are as follows:

Setting Policies, Hiring the Superintendent, Approving the Budget, Curriculum Oversight, and Representing the Community



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Joel D. Ramirez



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Valerie Freeman



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Della McCall



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Commissioner  
Kenneth L. Simmons



Commissioner  
Corey Teague

## **District Administration**

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Dr. Rodney A. Henderson	Deputy Superintendent
Ms. Nahed Badawy	Assistant Superintendent – Unit II
Ms. Cheryl Coy	Assistant Superintendent of Special Education and Services
Dr. David Cozart, Jr.	Assistant Superintendent - Unit I
Dr. Melissa Espana	Assistant Superintendent - Unit IV
Ms. June Gray	Business Administrator
Mr. Luis M. Rojas, Jr.,	Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources/Labor Relations & Affirmative Action
Ms. Joanna Tsimpedes	Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services/Special Projects
Dr. Cicely Warren	Assistant Superintendent - Unit III
Boris Zaydel, Esq	District Legal Attorney

## **District Message**

In the Paterson Public Schools, the safety of our students and staff is our highest priority. Every member of our district plays a crucial role in maintaining a safe and welcoming learning environment across all 56 schools, including our students themselves. To support this objective, the Paterson Public School District has published this Student Code of Student Conduct manual in accordance with New Jersey State Law 18A: 37-2.

This manual aims to clearly articulate the district's expectations for student behavior and the principles of mutual respect that should govern student interactions. It also outlines the district's policies regarding violations of the Student Code of Student Conduct.

The development of this updated Student Code of Student Conduct involved the valuable contributions of numerous individuals within the Paterson community. It reflects the collaborative efforts of district educators, administrators, students, parents, and community stakeholders. The Paterson Board of Education commissioners have thoroughly reviewed and approved this document.

We believe that this Student Code of Student Conduct will enhance our efforts to unlock the full potential of our students and support them in achieving their hopes, dreams, and aspirations—whether that involves attending college or entering the workforce.

Thank you for your continued support of Paterson Public Schools.

## The Code of Student Conduct

The Code of Student Conduct provides guidelines for school responses to misconduct that take into account, at a minimum, the severity of the offenses, the developmental ages of the student offenders, and students' histories of inappropriate behaviors. Students will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action for violations of the Code of Student Conduct that occur on or off school grounds, including on a school bus or at a school-sponsored function. Approved disciplinary sanctions include:

- Admonishment
- Before/After-School Detention
- Lunch Detention
- Saturday Detention
- Early Dismissal Day Detention
- In-School Suspension
- Out-of-School Suspension
- Expulsion

Where the discipline is greater than an admonishment, the student's parent will be notified of the offense and of the discipline imposed, and will be offered an opportunity to speak with the building Principal. For incidents of misconduct that occur outside of school, disciplinary action may be imposed if it is reasonably necessary for the physical or emotional safety, security, and well-being of the student or for reasons relating to the safety, security, and well-being of other students, staff, or school property. Discipline will be applied without regard to race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical, or sensory disability or by any other distinguishing characteristic.

### Infractions and Offenses

Appropriate corrective and/or disciplinary measures will be determined based on the nature and severity of the offense and frequency of infraction. Conduct offenses generally fall into three categories of severity, with Category 3 infractions being subject to mandatory and serious disciplinary action. If a student repeatedly commits a Category 1 offense, the next occurrence may be elevated to a Category 2 offense and will be subject to more severe forms of discipline. **Charts of specific offenses and disciplinary sanctions are attached at the end of this Handbook.**

### Kindergarten – Grade 2:

Our goal in the primary education program is to prepare young children to succeed in school; suspending or expelling them fails to accomplish that goal. Suspending or expelling kindergarten – grade 2 students is not an age-appropriate method for addressing behavioral problems. There are no short-term or long-term outcomes that will benefit a child when he/she cannot be in school to receive the needed support services due to out-of-school disciplinary measures.

New Jersey state statutes provide specific guidance on how to address student behaviors for students in grades kindergarten through grade 2. N.J.A.C. 6A:10A-2.2, **“Preschool students in a general education program or special education program shall not be suspended, long-term**

**or short-term, and shall not be expelled."** This does not apply to the following types of infringements:

- except as provided pursuant to the “Zero Tolerance for Guns Act,” P.L.1995, c.127 (C.18A:37-7 et seq.).”
- except when the suspension is based on conduct that is of a violent or sexual nature that endangers others.

Principals must contact their administrators to discuss possible disciplinary actions that appear to meet the New Jersey Statutes student discipline exemption.

### **Students with Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities are subject to the same disciplinary procedures as non-classified students and may be disciplined in accordance with their IEP or 504 Plan. Prior to suspending a classified student for ten (10) days or more, a Manifestation Determination hearing must be held to determine if the offensive conduct was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to the disability, or was the direct result of a failure to implement the student’s IEP or 504 Plan. In addition, the child’s case manager must be notified prior to the imposition of discipline.

### **Restorative Practices**

#### **What is Restorative Practices and Restorative Circles?**

Restorative practices offer school administrators an opportunity to implement alternative disciplinary measures that diverge from traditional approaches. These practices emphasize conflict resolution, harm repair, and the social-emotional well-being of students. The goal is to cultivate a sense of community and foster healthy relationships, thereby reducing conflicts by providing effective strategies for resolution. The use of “circles”—conflict-resolution techniques involving all relevant participants—may be employed as appropriate, potentially including both students and parents when necessary.

A restorative circle is a method designed to build and mend relationships through equitable sharing and active listening. These talking circles equip individuals with essential skills for managing conflicts by ensuring that everyone can speak and be heard. Restorative circles are particularly valuable for young people as they learn to navigate conflict, enabling them to practice respectful listening and healthy self-expression.

In educational settings, these circles are frequently utilized as a response to wrongdoing or conflict, serving as an alternative to traditional disciplinary strategies. However, they can also be effective in providing preventative measures for future challenges. Circles possess the ability to create and strengthen support networks among peers, laying the foundation for a trusting classroom environment.

Building administrators will use restorative circles to address student disciplinary infractions. They can be used for all discipline categories, but will not replace mandated Category III offenses. These offenses are as follows:

- Possession or use of an explosive device
- Possession of a dangerous weapon or firearm
- Substance abuse policy violation
- Sexual assault

Building administrators may include parents or other stakeholders deemed relevant to support the students involved in a restorative circle. An additional restorative circle can be used to reintegrate students from a disciplinary infraction.

### **Expectations for Student Conduct**

*Policy & Regulation 5500 (Expectations for Pupil Conduct), 5511 (Dress and Grooming), 5512 (Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying), 5513 (Care of School Property), 5530 (Substance Abuse), 5533 (Smoking), 5570 (Sportsmanship), 7434 (Smoking on School Grounds), 7435 (Alcoholic Beverages on School Premises), 9162 (Athletic Code of Student Conduct)*

The District recognizes that an effective instructional program requires an orderly school environment. The effectiveness of a successful educational program is reflected in students' behavior.

The District expects each student to behave in keeping with his/her level of maturity and with appropriate regard for the rights and welfare of other students, and the educational purpose underlying school activities, and with due care for school facilities and equipment.

The District requires that school administrators and staff consistently and uniformly enforce the Student Code of Student Conduct. This will provide an easily understandable set of expectations for conduct and standards for correction, ensuring due process and accountability throughout the District.

Students must demonstrate courtesy and respect to all members of the school community, to avoid engaging in offensive conduct and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop. Students also must at all times comply with Federal and State laws, District policies and regulations, and instructions from school authorities.

Additionally, students are expected to attend school every day and to arrive on time. Students must participate in scheduled classes regularly to keep up with coursework, achieve course objectives, learn skills, acquire knowledge, and earn the course credits required for grade promotion and graduation from high school. Every effort should be made to avoid unnecessary absences and instances of lateness.

The Student Code of Student Conduct is based on the following core ethical values adopted by the District:

- a) Respect for self and others
- b) Honesty/trustworthiness
- c) Responsibility
- d) Caring

All students are expected to embody the ethical values of the school community as follows:

1) Be respectful by:

- Showing concern and regard for everyone;
- Avoiding the use of profanity and inappropriate language;
- Being non-violent, and
- Adhering to school rules and procedures.

2) Be trustworthy by:

- Being honest and telling the truth;
- Refraining from cheating and stealing, and do not tolerate those who do;
- Respecting the property of others; and
- Honoring commitments to parents, family, teachers, and peers.

3) Be responsible by:

- Accepting the consequences of your behavior;
- Striving to do your personal best;
- Being prepared for school and attending all classes on time every day; and
- Making academics the primary goal.

4) Be caring by:

- Considering the feelings of others;
- Using mediation to solve disagreements;
- Asking for help if needed; and
- Valuing differences in self and others.

Students, parent(s) or legal guardian(s), school administrators, and the District all agree that positive student commitment and behavior are essential for active learning. It is crucial to help students realize that their attitudes and actions are directly related to their school experiences and those of their classmates. With the support and assistance of school personnel and parent(s) or legal guardian(s), all students can demonstrate actions that contribute to the effectiveness of schools and the worth of their learning experiences. All students, regardless of age or ability, can behave in ways that enhance school social relationships and facilitate learning.

## **Rights and Responsibilities**

All members of the school community have the right to be treated respectfully by one another and to be in a safe and orderly environment, encourages student engagement in learning, supports family and community engagement in school, and supports a professional work environment.

## **A Community of Learners**

Schools will intentionally foster relationships among students, faculty, administrators, and other school staff around the common goal of becoming a Community of Learners.

All members of the school community have certain rights and responsibilities. Among these rights are the right to be free of discrimination and harassment and to be treated with respect and dignity.

## **Rights of Students**

Every student has the right to:

- Receive appropriate public education;
- Attend school in a safe and secure school environment;
- Attend school regardless of students' marriage, pregnancy or parenthood status;
- Privacy protections pursuant to Federal and State laws;
- Inspect their school records and participate in developing their academic program;
- Freedom of speech, unless such expression impinges on the rights of others;
- Freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures;
- Advance notice of behavioral expectations and
- Due process and appeal procedures, including the right to be informed of, respond to, and appeal any disciplinary action taken.

## **Responsibilities of Students**

Every student has the responsibility to:

- Come to school on time, be prepared and ready to learn each day.
- Respect self, others, and their property;
- Plan for the future; and
- Ask for help when needed.

## **Rights of Families**

Every parent/guardian has the right to:

- Participate in planning their child's academic program and inspect their child's school records;
- Visit their child's school according to school-based protocol; and
- Parent/guardian notification consistent with District policies and regulations and due process procedures.

## **Responsibilities of Families**

Every parent/guardian has the responsibility to:

- Ensure their child arrives at school on time, prepared to learn each day;
- Be respectful of school employees.
- Help their child plan for each day, week, and year in school and be an active participant in educating their child;
- Ask for help when unable to meet the needs of their child.
- Reinforce the District's behavioral expectations for students; and
- Provide the District with an accurate and up-to-date address, telephone number, and emergency contact information.

## **Rights of Teachers**

Every teacher has the right to:

- Be treated like a professional;
- Access equipment, tools, and supports necessary to perform their job duties;
- Collaborate with parents/guardians, administrators and support staff regarding the needs of individual students; and
- Receive information from administrators regarding student discipline outcomes.

## **Responsibilities of Teachers**

Every teacher has the responsibility to:

- Come to school on time, prepared and ready to provide high-quality instruction each day.
- Behave professionally and treat all members of the school community with respect.
- Model and teach behavioral expectations to students;
- Create a positive learning environment.
- Evaluate the progress of students;
- Communicate with parents/guardians, staff, and administrators regarding student learning and support needs;
- Seek to involve parents in educating their children; and
- Enforce the Code of Student Conduct.

## **Rights of Administrators and Support Staff**

Every administrator and staff member has the right to:

- Be treated as a professional, and
- Access equipment, tools, and supports necessary to perform their job duties.

## **Responsibilities of Administrators and Support Staff**

Every administrator and school staff member has the responsibility to:

- Come to school on time, prepared and ready to work each day;
- Behave professionally and treat all members of the school community with respect.
- Model and teach behavioral expectations to students;
- Create a positive learning environment.
- Support effective and efficient school operations;
- Act as a school ambassador for students, families, faculty, and community partners; and
- Enforce the Code of Student Conduct.

## **Rights of Community Partners**

Every community partner has the right to:

- Be treated as a member of the school community.

## **Responsibilities of Community Partners**

Every community partner has the responsibility to:

- Register with the Office of Parent and Community Engagement before working directly with students in schools.
- Model and teach behavioral expectations to students;
- Create a positive learning environment; and

- Communicate all concerns to school personnel and/or District staff.

## **Use Of Electronic Security Devices**

### **Paterson Public School District Security Statement**

The Paterson Public School District is committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment for all students, staff, and visitors. To support this commitment, our schools employ a range of electronic security measures, including walk-through body scanners, bag scanners, handheld wands, and security cameras. These tools are essential in protecting the well-being of our school community.

Video recordings may be reviewed in cases of inappropriate student behavior to help guide decisions regarding disciplinary actions. When necessary, video footage may also be shared with law enforcement agencies. All recordings are managed under the authority of the Superintendent's designee to ensure proper oversight and confidentiality.

To maintain the integrity of this system, staff, students, parents, and school personnel are strictly prohibited from accessing or distributing video footage without the prior written consent of the District Superintendent or their designee.

### **Lockers and Assigned Storage Areas**

Each student will be held responsible for the condition, cleanliness, and contents of their assigned storage space.

Assigned spaces, including lockers, are the property of the District and may be searched and/or inspected by law enforcement or school authorities at any time and for any reason or no reason. Prohibited items will be confiscated and may be reported to the proper authorities.

To avoid theft, loss, or damage, and potential disciplinary action or criminal consequences, students should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Keep assigned storage spaces locked at all times
- Do not share combinations, keys, or space with other students
- Avoid storing money, jewelry, or other valuables

Neither the District, nor the school, nor the staff members will assume any obligation for the possible theft, loss, or damage of stored contents.

### **Searches And Seizures By School Officials**

Lockers, desks, and other storage areas are the property of the District and may be searched by school officials at any time, for any reason, or even without reason. Prohibited items will be confiscated and may be reported to the appropriate authorities.

To ensure a safe and orderly school environment that promotes learning and academic success, a school official may utilize a metal detector or wand to screen students and their personal belongings (such as purses, backpacks, or personal electronic devices). Furthermore, a student's person and property may be searched manually, with or without assistance from law enforcement, if a school official has reasonable grounds to suspect that the student has violated, or is currently violating, either the law or the school's rules. The extent of the search should not be overly intrusive. It must remain reasonable, taking into account the student's gender and maturity level, the reasons for suspicion, and the nature of the suspected violation.

School personnel are prohibited from conducting cavity searches or strip searches. However, a pat-down search may be performed with the support of school security personnel. School officials are encouraged to contact local police if a more invasive search of a student's person is deemed necessary. Whenever possible, searches should take place in a private setting. If a school official decides to conduct a search, they should inform the student of the reasons for the search.

To reduce disruptions and preserve evidence, a student who refuses to comply with a search request will be escorted to a designated classroom or office, away from other students if possible, where school officials will supervise them until a parent and/or police officer arrives to assist with the situation.

## **Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, Hazing**

At Paterson Public Schools, the safety and well-being of **all students** is our top priority. We are committed to providing a nurturing environment where every child can grow socially, emotionally, and academically.

We recognize that external factors can sometimes affect our students, leading them to feel isolated, disengaged, or withdrawn. To protect our students, the Paterson Public School District strictly prohibits **harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB)** in all forms, as outlined in **Board Policy 5512**.

If a student believes they have experienced harassment, intimidation, bullying (including cyberbullying), or hazing—or if they have witnessed it happening to someone else—it is important that the student or parent notify a **teacher, counselor, or administrator** immediately. All reports will be investigated, and disciplinary action will be taken when appropriate.

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### **What is Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB)?**

HIB is **unwanted, aggressive behavior** that may involve a real or perceived power imbalance. It can be a single incident or a series of incidents and includes:

- Gestures
- Written, verbal, or physical acts
- Electronic communication

HIB may be motivated by actual or perceived characteristics such as race, color, gender, religion, disability, or any other distinguishing trait. It can occur:

- On school property
- At school-sponsored events

- On a school bus
- Off school grounds

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### **The 3-Part Test for HIB**

An incident is considered harassment, intimidation, or bullying if it meets the following criteria:

1. **Disruption** – Causes disruption or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or a student’s rights.
2. **Motivation** – Is motivated by a distinguishing characteristic.
3. **Impact** – Includes one or more of the following:
  - Causes physical or emotional harm, or fear of harm, to a student or their property
  - Insults, demeans, or belittles a student or group of students
  - Creates a hostile educational environment that interferes with a student’s learning or well-being

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**Together, we can ensure that every student feels safe, respected, and supported at Paterson Public Schools.**

### **Consequences and Remedial Actions**

Students who engage in one or more acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying (HIB) may face consequences ranging from **positive behavioral interventions** to **suspension**, in alignment with the Student Code of Student Conduct.

When determining appropriate consequences, the school will consider several factors:

1. **Student Factors**
  - Age, developmental stage, and maturity level
  - Degree of harm caused
  - Severity of the behavior
  - Whether there is a pattern of repeated behavior
2. **School Factors**
  - Overall school culture and climate
  - Availability of social-emotional and behavioral supports
3. **Personal Factors**
  - Life skill development and needs
  - Peer and social relationships
  - Hobbies and interests
  - Participation in extracurricular activities
  - Academic performance
4. **Environmental Factors**
  - Family, community, and neighborhood circumstances
  - Classroom management practices
  - Access to social-emotional and behavioral supports

### **Remedial Measures**

In addition to consequences, remedial actions will be taken to:

- Correct the problem behavior
- Prevent future incidents

- Provide protection and support for the victim

For more information, please review **Board Policy 5512** and the District’s online resource guide: *A Complete Guide to Understanding Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying*.

## **Sexting**

The creation, possession, dissemination, transfer, or sharing of obscene, pornographic, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or photographs—whether by electronic data transfer (e.g., texting, emailing, social media) or by other means—may constitute a **crime** under state and/or federal law.

Any individual involved in such activities will:

- Be subject to the **disciplinary procedures** of the Paterson Public School District
- Be **reported to law enforcement and/or other appropriate state or federal agencies**

Such actions may result in **arrest, criminal prosecution, and lifetime inclusion on sexual offender registries**.

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## **Dating Violence**

All acts or incidents of dating violence occurring at school must be reported to the **building principal** or their designee. Reports will be promptly investigated in accordance with **Policy and Regulation 5519**.

During the investigation:

- Both the victim and the alleged aggressor will be interviewed
- Both parties will be notified **in writing** of the outcome and determination

Each case will be addressed using a range of strategies, which may include:

- Remediation and intervention
- Education and prevention support
- Disciplinary consequences consistent with the **Code of Student Conduct**

If warranted, the matter may also be referred to **law enforcement**.

## **Alcohol, Tobacco, Vaping, and Illicit Drugs**

The possession, use, or distribution of alcohol, tobacco, vaping devices (electronic nicotine delivery systems), or illicit drugs is strictly prohibited on school grounds and at all school-sponsored events. **Any student suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs and/or in possession of alcohol, tobacco, vaping devices (electronic nicotine delivery systems), or illicit drugs will be referred for a mandatory drug and alcohol screening, in accordance with district policy.**

**Disciplinary actions and suspensions should only be used when a student is found in possession of alcohol, tobacco, vaping devices, illicit drugs or drug paraphernalia.**

The district is committed to maintaining a safe, healthy, and drug-free learning environment for all students, staff, and visitors.

## Dress Code

The District recognizes that grooming and dress styles communicate individual preferences and can influence student behavior, thereby enhancing a school's learning environment. Students are expected to dress appropriately for school – this means being clean and well-groomed, and avoiding styles of dress and grooming that disrupt the school environment or distract other students. Such limitations on a student's taste and individuality are necessary to achieve the school's educational goals.

Styles that interfere with the school's educational program and mission will not be tolerated. Clothing or accessories that pose a danger to the health or safety of students and staff or are harmful to school property are prohibited. Students are expected to wear appropriate clothing and may be required to wear a school uniform.

Parents/guardians are reminded to monitor their children's attire before they leave for school to prevent the loss of class time.

- Students are expected to wear school uniforms.
- Hats, hoods, scarves, or other head coverings cannot be worn except for religious or medical purposes.
- Coats and jackets should be placed in lockers or other designated storage areas during school hours unless instructed otherwise by school officials.
- Platform shoes, flip-flops, slippers, open-back strapless shoes, and shoes with loose or untied laces or straps that pose a safety hazard are not permitted.
- Clothing that is revealing, provocative, or see-through is not permitted.
- Sagging pants and exposed undergarments or midriffs (belly shirts) are not acceptable.
- Shorts and skirts must reach the length of the student's extended fingertips.
- Hanging pocket chains, sunglasses, hats, head rags, handkerchiefs, bandanas, gang paraphernalia, and clothing that displays profanity, encourages gang affiliation, violence, or the use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco, or has sexual connotations, is not permitted.
- Unless the school has a uniform for physical education classes, students participating in physical education classes may wear any color shorts or sweatpants and a t-shirt without penalty.
- Athletic footwear (sneakers) must be worn during physical education classes.
- Changing into gym clothing is optional for high school students. They will not be penalized or prevented from participating in class if their clothing meets the acceptable gym clothing requirements.

## **Student ID Cards**

It is our responsibility to create and maintain a safe and orderly environment for all our stakeholders. All high school students will be issued school ID cards that must be visible at all times while on school grounds. The cards must contain the following information on their back:

- The New Jersey Suicide Prevention Hopeline (NJ Hopeline) 855.654.6735
- The Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, call or text 988.

All students will be responsible for paying \$5.00 for lost or damaged ID cards.

## **Disciplinary Hearing – Due Process Hearings**

### **Disciplinary Hearings in Paterson Public Schools: Compliance and Legal Framework**

Paterson Public School District is committed to maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. Disciplinary hearings are a critical component of this commitment, ensuring that students' rights are upheld while addressing behavioral concerns in accordance with district policies and state regulations.

### **District Policies and Procedures**

Paterson Public School District adheres to a structured Code of Student Conduct that outlines standards for student behavior and procedures for addressing violations. The district's policy emphasizes the importance of due process, ensuring that students facing disciplinary action receive appropriate notice and an opportunity to be heard. This approach aligns with the requirements outlined in New Jersey Administrative Code § 6A:16-7.1, which mandates that each school district develop, adopt, disseminate, and implement a code of student conduct that establishes standards, policies, and procedures for positive student development and behavioral expectations.

### **Legal Framework**

Various statutes and regulations govern disciplinary actions in New Jersey public schools. Key among these is **N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2**, which provides the legal basis for the discipline of pupils. Additionally, **N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7** outlines the procedures for short-term suspensions, long-term suspensions, and expulsions, emphasizing the need for fairness and consistency in the application of disciplinary measures. For students with disabilities, additional protections are in place under **N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.8**. This regulation stipulates that the removal of a student with a disability from their current educational placement for disciplinary reasons constitutes a change of placement if the removal is for more than 10 consecutive school days or if a series of removals cumulates to more than 10 school days in a school year. In such cases, the district must provide services to the extent necessary to enable the student to progress appropriately in the general education curriculum and advance appropriately toward achieving the goals set out in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

### **Student Attendance**

Students are expected to attend school every day and to arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his or her education. Every effort should be made to avoid unnecessary absences and instances of lateness. Students who are chronically late to school

or class, or skip instructional or non-instructional periods, or are absent from school or class without prior excuse, will be subject to consequences.

Students who are absent from school will be excluded from that day's athletic and/or after-school activities. Additionally, unexcused absences from school or class may result in disciplinary action. All disciplinary actions shall be subject to the availability of school resources and supervisory personnel.

Each time a student is absent from school or class without prior excuse, the student's parent will receive an automated telephone call. The parent may be asked to explain the student's absence.

Students who are chronically absent or late will be referred to the school Intervention and Referral Team to determine appropriate interventions and to the school attendance officer to determine if a truancy investigation is warranted. Students who reach twenty (20) or more unexcused absences in any one class may not receive course credit for that class. Twenty (20) or more unexcused absences from school may result in a loss of credit for the school year and grade retention.

After the twentieth unexcused absence from school, the school will hold a hearing to determine whether credit recovery should be made available through an alternative education program.

**Seat Time may be provided for students to make up time due to unexcused absences for high school class courses.**

## **What is chronically absent?**

For K–12 students, "chronically absent" is defined as missing 10% or more of school days in a year for any reason, whether the absences are excused or unexcused. This amounts to about 18 days in a typical 180-day school year, or as few as two days per month.

### **Chronic absenteeism vs. truancy**

It is important to distinguish chronic absenteeism from truancy, which is a distinct metric.

- **Chronic Absenteeism:** A measure of total missed school days, regardless of the reason. It provides a more accurate picture of how many students are missing significant instructional time.
- **Truancy:** A measure of only unexcused absences. Unlike chronic absenteeism, it can mask the problem of students with many excused absences who are still academically behind.

## **Impact on students**

Missing a significant number of school days can have severe negative consequences for a student's academic and social development:

- **Lower academic achievement:** Chronic absenteeism in early grades, especially kindergarten and first grade, is linked to lower reading proficiency by the third grade.

- **Increased dropout risk:** Studies show that by middle and high school, chronic absence is a strong predictor of a student dropping out.
- **Missed opportunities:** Students miss out on instruction, opportunities for intervention, and the chance to build social and emotional skills with peers and teachers.

## **Tardiness: Policy 5240 (Excerpt)**

A tardy arrival to class may be treated as a class cut if the student misses more than half the class period. The consequence for three (3) tardy arrivals to school or to any one class shall be a written warning to the student's parents and detention before or after school, or at lunch.

For each additional instance of tardiness beyond the fifth, the consequence shall be one (1) detention before or after school, or at lunch.

Failure to serve an assigned detention before/after school or at lunch will result in one (1) Saturday detention. Students who are chronically late will be referred for counseling and truancy investigation.

## **Late Arrivals**

Students who arrive late to school **will not** be turned away and will be permitted to enter the school building. Students who are late to school will receive credit for classes attended, but will not receive credit for any classes missed that day. Any student who arrives late must report directly to the school's designated sign-in location to be processed for attendance purposes and to avoid being marked absent for the day.

## **Excused Absences**

Parents/guardians who expect their child to be absent from school are asked to call the school's Main Office to notify the school secretary. Absences from school or class due to religious observance, illness, family emergency, or participation in a school-approved activity will be excused only if verified by appropriate documentation. Documentation must be presented to the Main Office within 2 days of a student's return to school.

Students who are absent due to religious observance must provide written notice, signed by their parent, before the day of the absence. For absences due to family emergencies, students must provide written notice signed by the parent. For absences lasting five (5) or more days due to illness, the student must provide a doctor's note.

## **Cutting Class**

Students must attend scheduled classes regularly in order to keep up with coursework, achieve course objectives, learn skills, acquire knowledge, and earn the course credits required for grade promotion and graduation from high school. Absences from class can seriously disrupt the learning process. **Cutting class means being absent from a scheduled class without permission.** This includes instructional periods as well as lunch and activities such as assemblies.

## **Student Arrival and Dismissal**

Students may be picked up from school only by their parent or by another non-student adult who has been authorized in writing by the student's parent or designated on the school's emergency contact form. Prior authorization must be submitted to the Main Office and signed by the student's parent. Authorized adults must present photo identification at the Main Office.

### **Arrival:**

- Students may enter the school building only after the first school bell rings. Therefore, parents should be sure NOT to drop their children off at school before **the first bell** as no certificated staff will be available to supervise students before that time. During inclement weather, such as rain, snow, or falling temperatures, students will be escorted to designated areas as defined by the building principal.
- The school may notify local law enforcement and/or DCP&P if we believe that a child's early arrival at school endangers their health and well-being.

### **Dismissal:**

- Students should leave school promptly when dismissed, or else face consequences such as written warnings, referrals to local law enforcement and/or DCP&P, and home address verification.
- Students in grades 3 through 12 will be released only to their parent/guardian at dismissal time, unless the parent/guardian has submitted either (a) an Unaccompanied Dismissal Permission Form, or (b) a Pick-Up Permission Form.
- Parents must submit the Unaccompanied Dismissal Permission Form if they wish to allow their child to walk home alone after school, without an escort. Only students in grades 3 through 12 may walk home alone.
- Parents must submit the Pick-Up Permission Form if they wish to allow someone other than a parent to escort their child from school. Only individuals named as "emergency contacts" on this form may escort the student. Students will not be released to any individual who is not listed on this form or who is unable to provide photo ID.

## **Grievances**

Student grievances are complaints arising from the acts or policies of the District or its employees. It is the right of every student to seek redress of grievances without fear of retaliation or reprisal.

A student or their parent must first attempt to resolve a grievance directly and informally by informing a guidance counselor or the staff member who is the subject of the grievance. If the grievance cannot be resolved informally, the student must prepare a written statement describing the nature of the specific grievance, the facts that gave rise to it, the resolution sought by the student, and the reasons why such a resolution is appropriate. The student must then submit his or her written grievance to the school principal for an opportunity to be heard.

If an appropriate resolution is not reached, the student may then submit the written grievance to the Superintendent for hearing, and then to the Board. The student will have the opportunity to appeal any Board decision to the State Commissioner of Education.

## **Student Records**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of students' educational records and affords certain rights to parents and eligible students to access and dispute the contents of these records. These rights belong to parents only concerning their children's educational records, and they transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have been transferred are "eligible students."

Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's educational records. Schools do not have to provide copies of records unless extenuating circumstances make it impractical to review them at the location designated by the school. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

Parents and eligible students have the right to request that the school correct records they believe are inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to include a statement in the record describing his or her view about the contested information.

Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions:

- School officials with legitimate educational interest.
- Other schools to which a student is transferring.
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes.
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student.
- Organizations conduct certain studies for or on behalf of the school.
- Accrediting organizations.
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law.

**Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must inform parents and eligible students about directory information and allow them a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them.**

## **Appendices**

## APPENDIX A

### Charts of Student Discipline Grade 3 - 12

<b>Category I</b>	
<b>Infraction</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Violation of dress code	Failure to comply with the school dress code.
Failure to report for detention	Absence from detention without a valid, documented excuse.
Use of obscene or profane language or gestures	Use of language or gestures that are foul, abusive, derogatory, or demeaning.
Failure to produce a school identification card upon request	Failure to produce a District-issued student identification card for inspection by a school staff member.
Noncooperation or defiance	Discourteous, uncivil, or insolent conduct that demonstrates a lack of respect for the authority of teachers or other school staff members.
Disruptive or disorderly conduct	Willful conduct that creates public inconvenience, hazard, annoyance or alarm.
<b><u>PENALTIES</u></b>	
Notification of parent/guardian, possible referral to counseling, Possible detention before/after school, at lunch, or on Saturday.	

<b>Category II</b>	
<b>Infraction</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Repeated recurrence of a Category I offense	
Theft	The unauthorized taking of property that belongs to the District or to another person.
Use of profane language or gestures toward staff	Use of foul, abusive, derogatory, or demeaning language or gestures toward school staff.
Aggressive physical contact	Intentionally hitting, pushing, or shoving a person other than a District employee.
Unauthorized departure from school or class.	Departure from class, from the school building, from school grounds, or from a school-sponsored activity without the permission of a supervising staff member.
School bus misconduct	Willful violation of school rules or transportation safety requirements as a passenger.
Smoking policy violation (including vaping)	Violation of District policies on smoking in school or at off-site school functions.
Trespass or unauthorized entry onto school premises	Entry onto school premises or access to a portion of the premises without permission and without authority.
Sexual harassment	Inappropriate speech or conduct that may constitute sexual harassment.
Sexting	The taking, disseminating, transferring, or sharing of obscene, pornographic, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or photographs, whether by electronic data transfer or otherwise (commonly called texting, sexting, emailing, etc.), may constitute a CRIME under state and/or federal law. Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, or sharing obscene, pornographic, lewd or otherwise illegal images or photographs will be subject to the disciplinary procedures of

	the school district; and reported to law enforcement and/or other appropriate state or federal agencies, which may result in arrest, criminal prosecution, and LIFETIME inclusion on sexual offender registries.
Gambling	Wagers of anything of value on games of skill or chance.
Prohibited use of an electronic device	Use of District-issued or privately owned technology in a manner or for a purpose that would interfere with or inhibit the educational mission of the school.
Possession of an imitation firearm	Possession of an object or device reasonably capable of being mistaken for a firearm.
Harassment, intimidation, and or bullying	Any act or communication that is directed at a student based on any distinguishing characteristic and which has the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property.
Consensual sexual contact between students	Any sexual act that takes place between students on school grounds or during school-sponsored activities.
<b><u>PENALTIES</u></b>	
<b>Immediate notification of parent/guardian, parent/guardian conference with the administrator, possible restitution for damages, possible referral to law enforcement, to counseling, or to HIB Officer. Possible detention before/after school, at lunch, or on Saturday. Possible in school or out-of-school suspension for up to five (5) days, or expulsion.</b>	

<b>Category III</b>	
<b>Infraction</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Repeated recurrence of a Category II offense	
False Reports, Threat Hoaxes, or Tampering with Emergency Systems	Knowingly making a false report to police or emergency responders, creating the appearance of a threat or emergency that causes a response when no emergency exists, or disabling or tampering with any alarm or emergency system.
SWATTING	Making false reports to law enforcement intentionally creates a significant emergency response that diverts critical resources and poses a danger to public safety. N.J.S.A. 2C:28-4 fourth-degree crime with criminal penalties of up to 18 months in state prison and a fine of \$10,000 plus applicable surcharges
Assault with an imitation firearm or weapon that is not a firearm*	Attack or threatened attack upon a person, other than a District employee, with an object or device reasonably capable of being mistaken for a firearm, or with an object or instrument that is not a firearm but is readily capable of lethal use or of inflicting serious bodily injury.
Weapon Offense Possession or distribution of a weapon other than a firearm.	A weapon is any instrument readily capable of or that can be converted to a lethal use or of inflicting serious bodily injury. Components that can be used to assemble into a weapon are reported in this category. This includes knife/blade (includes razor blade and box cutter. Spray: a device that projects, releases, or emits tear gas or any other substance, such as pepper spray, that is intended to produce temporary discomfort or permanent injury through being vaporized or otherwise dispensed in the air. (NJDOE, Office of Fiscal and Data Services 2024-2025)
Substance abuse policy violation <sup>F</sup>	Violation of District policies on drugs or alcohol in school or at off-site school functions.
Arson	An intentional or reckless act that causes a fire for a malicious purpose on school grounds.
Extortion/Robbery	The use of force or threatened force to obtain a thing of value from another person.

Vandalism	An act of defacement that causes damage to the property of the District or of another person.
Assault of a District employee*	Attempted, threatened or willful act for the purpose of causing bodily injury to a person who is employed by the District.
Assault of a person other than a District employee.	Attempted, threatened or willful act for the purpose of causing bodily injury to a person who is not a District employee.
Possession or use of an explosive device*	Possession, transfer, or detonation of any explosive device on school grounds.
Academic dishonesty	Cheating, plagiarism, and improper use of AI as referenced in the district model student handbooks.
Forgery or fraud	Falsification of documents or of an adult's signature on a school document
Sexual assault	The use of force, threatened force, or intimidation to coerce a sexual act.

**PENALTIES**

**Immediate notification of parent/guardian, parent/guardian conference with the administrator, possible restitution for damages, possible referral to law enforcement or DCPP, to HIB Officer, to counseling, or to Child Study Team. Possible detention before/after school, at lunch, or on Saturday. Possible elimination of-extracurricular privileges. Possible expulsion. Possible out-of-school suspension for up to ten (10) days.**

**Mandatory Manifestation Determination Hearing (MD) for students with disabilities to determine if discipline is directly correlated to student disability.**

<sup>T</sup> **Mandatory referral for immediate medical examination in accordance with Policy 5530.**

<sup>\*</sup>**Mandatory immediate removal from school and placement in an Interim Alternative Education Setting pending a formal disciplinary hearing within ten (10) days.**



## APPENDIX B

### Charts of Student Attendance Penalties

(ELEMENTARY GRADE 3 - 8  
ATTENDANCE SANCTIONS)

<b>Tardiness</b>	
<b>Number of Tardy Arrivals</b>	<b>Penalty</b>
<b>3</b>	Written warning to parents and one (1) forty-minute detention before or after school, or at lunch.
<b>5</b>	Mandatory parental conference with school principal or classroom teacher and two (2) detentions before or after school, or at lunch.
<b>6 or more</b>	For each tardy arrival beyond the fifth, one (1) forty-minute detention before or after school, or at lunch.
Failure to serve an assigned detention before/after school or at lunch will result in one (1) Saturday detention. Students who are chronically late will be referred for counseling and truancy investigation.	

<b>Skipping/Cutting School or Class</b>	
<b>Number of Classes Skipped/Cut</b>	<b>Penalty</b>
<b>1</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> written warning to parents and one (1) forty-minute detention before or after school, or at lunch.
<b>2</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> written warning to parents and three (3) forty-minute detentions before or after school, or at lunch.
<b>3</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> written warning to parents and five (5) forty-minute detentions before or after school, or at lunch.
<b>4</b>	Mandatory parental conference with school principal and seven (7) forty-minute detentions before or after school, or at lunch.

<b>5 or more</b>	For each instance of a cut beyond the fourth, one (1) Saturday detention, possible in-school suspension, and possible referral to an alternative educational setting.
A tardy arrival may be treated as a class cut if the student misses more than half the class period. Failure to serve an assigned 40-minute detention will result in one (1) Saturday detention (pending the availability of funds and/or Saturday detention program)	

<b>Absenteeism</b>	
<b>Number of Unexcused Absences</b>	<b>Penalty</b>
<b>2</b>	After 2 days in September, the school administration will call the parent/legal guardian.
<b>5 and 7</b>	The parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will receive a telephone call from the attendance office.
<b>10</b>	The student is considered truant by law. A home visit will be conducted by the attendance office, and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be scheduled for a mandatory court appearance. Truancy is a disorderly person's offense that may result in fines at the court's discretion.
<b>15</b>	The parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will receive a telephone call from the attendance office.
<b>18</b>	A student is considered chronically absent by law. A mandatory attendance meeting with the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be scheduled at the school.
<b>20</b>	A student may be retained at grade level per board policy.
<p>Parents will receive an automated phone call each time a student is absent from school. Each unexcused absence is an instance of truancy. Absent students must complete all assignments missed. The principal must send any missed assignments home to students who are absent for a known period of time.</p>	

## APPENDIX C

### Charts of Student Attendance Penalties HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SANCTIONS

<b>Tardiness</b>	
<b>Number of Tardy Arrivals</b>	<b>Penalty</b>
<b>3</b>	Written warning to parents and one (1) forty-minute detention before or after school, or at lunch.
<b>5</b>	Mandatory parental conference with school principal or classroom teacher and two (2) detentions before or after school, or at lunch.
<b>6 or more</b>	For each tardy arrival beyond the fifth, one (1) forty-minute detention before or after school, or at lunch.
Failure to serve an assigned detention before/after school or at lunch may result in one (1) Saturday detention. Students who are chronically late will be referred for counseling and truancy investigation.	

<b>Skipping/Cutting School or Class</b>	
<b>Number of Classes Skipped/Cut</b>	<b>Penalty</b>
<b>1</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> written warning to parents and one (1) forty-minute detention before or after school, or at lunch.
<b>2</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> written warning to parents and three (3) forty-minute detentions before or after school, or at lunch.
<b>3</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> written warning to parents and five (5) forty-minute detentions before or after school, or at lunch.
<b>4</b>	Mandatory parental conference with school principal and seven (7) forty-minute detentions before or after school, or at lunch.

<b>5 or more</b>	For each instance of a cut beyond the fourth, one (1) Saturday detention, possible in-school suspension, and possible referral to an alternative educational setting.
A tardy arrival may be treated as a class cut if the student misses more than half the class period. Failure to serve an assigned 40-minute detention may result in one (1) Saturday detention.	

<b>Absenteeism</b>	
<b>Number of Unexcused Absences</b>	<b>Penalty</b>
<b>2</b>	After 2 days in September, the school administration will call the parent/legal guardian.
<b>5 and 7</b>	The parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will receive a telephone call from the attendance office.
<b>10</b>	At 10 days of unexcused absences, a student is considered truant by law and there will be a home visit conducted by the attendance field investigators. A mandatory attendance hearing will be scheduled at the school with Guidance, a building administrator and a district attendance officer.
<b>15</b>	A home visit will be conducted by the attendance office and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be scheduled for a mandatory court appearance. Truancy is a disorderly persons offense that may result in fines of the court's discretion.
<b>18</b>	A student is considered chronically absent by law. Another telephone call will be made to the parent(s)/guardian(s) from the attendance office.
<b>20</b>	There will be another attendance hearing at the school to discuss possible alternative placement options and possible loss of credit.
Parents will receive an automated phone call each time a student is absent from school. Each unexcused absence is an instance of truancy. Absent students must complete all assignments missed. The principal must send any missed assignments home to students who are absent for a known period of time.	





