

PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow



Code of Student Conduct

August 2026

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Board of Education

The school board for the Paterson Public School District is made up of elected officials dedicated to enhancing the educational landscape of our community. This group plays a crucial role in guiding the district's direction and ensuring that the needs of students and families are met. Their key responsibilities encompass a variety of important functions:

- Setting Policies
- Hiring the Superintendent
- Approving the Budget
- Overseeing the Curriculum
- Representing the Community



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District Administration

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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 establishes clear expectations for student behavior and provides a framework for addressing misconduct in a fair, consistent, and developmentally appropriate manner. The primary goal of the Code is to promote a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment where all students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

When determining an appropriate disciplinary response, school administrators consider several factors, including the nature and severity of the offense, the age and developmental level of the student, the circumstances surrounding the incident, and the student's prior disciplinary history. Whenever possible, disciplinary actions are designed not only to address misconduct but also to encourage personal responsibility, positive decision-making, and behavioral growth.

Students may be subject to disciplinary action for violations of the Code of Student Conduct that occur on school grounds, on school buses, at school-sponsored activities or events, and, in certain circumstances, off campus when the conduct has a direct impact on the school environment or the safety and well-being of students and staff.

Approved disciplinary consequences may include:

- Admonishment (verbal warning or corrective conference)
- Before-School or After-School Detention
- Lunch Detention
- Saturday Detention
- Early Dismissal Day Detention
- In-School Suspension (ISS)
- Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)
- Expulsion

When a disciplinary consequence beyond an admonishment is imposed, the student's parent or guardian will be notified of both the offense and the disciplinary action taken. Parents or guardians will also be offered an opportunity to discuss the matter with the building principal or designee to ensure open communication and collaboration in addressing student behavior.

In cases involving misconduct that occurs outside of school, disciplinary action may be warranted when the behavior substantially disrupts the educational environment or when intervention is reasonably necessary to protect the physical or emotional safety, security, and well-being of students, staff, or school property.

Paterson Public School is committed to administering student discipline in a fair, equitable, and nondiscriminatory manner. All disciplinary decisions are made without regard to race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, or any other protected characteristic. The district strives to ensure that every student is

treated with dignity, respect, and fairness while maintaining high standards of conduct and accountability.

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), 5516 (Use of Electronic Communication Devices), 5517 (School District Issued Student Identification Cards), 5520 (Disorder and Demonstrations) 5530 (Substance Abuse), 5533 (Smoking), 5570 (Sportsmanship), 5701 (Academic Integrity), 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 that 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 and Responsibilities of Students, Families, Teachers

Rights of Students

Paterson Public School is committed to providing all students with a safe, equitable, and supportive learning environment that promotes academic achievement, personal growth, and responsible citizenship. Every student has the right to:

- Receive a free and appropriate public education that meets their individual learning needs and supports their academic success.

- Learn in a safe, secure, inclusive, and respectful school environment free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, intimidation, and threats to physical or emotional well-being.
- Attend school regardless of marital status, pregnancy, parenthood, or family circumstances, consistent with applicable federal and state laws.
- Have their privacy protected in accordance with federal and state laws and district policies.
- Access and review their educational records, as permitted by law, and participate in decisions regarding their academic program and educational goals.
- Express opinions, ideas, and beliefs respectfully and responsibly, provided such expression does not disrupt the educational process or infringe upon the rights and safety of others.
- Be free from unreasonable searches and seizures, consistent with applicable laws and district policies.
- Be informed of school rules, behavioral expectations, academic requirements, and the consequences for misconduct.
- Be treated fairly, respectfully, and without discrimination regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, or any other protected characteristic.
- Receive due process protections, including the right to be informed of alleged misconduct, present their perspective, and appeal disciplinary decisions in accordance with district procedures.

Responsibilities of Students

Students share responsibility for creating a positive school climate that supports learning and personal growth. Every student has the responsibility to:

- Attend school regularly, arrive on time, and come prepared to participate actively in learning each day.
- Demonstrate respect for themselves, others, and school property through their words, actions, and decisions.
- Follow school rules, district policies, and the expectations outlined in the Code of Student Conduct.
- Contribute to a safe, orderly, and positive learning environment.
- Take ownership of their learning by completing assignments, participating in class, and striving to achieve their academic potential.
- Set goals, plan for the future, and make responsible decisions that support personal and academic success.
- Seek assistance from teachers, counselors, administrators, or other trusted adults when facing academic, social, emotional, or personal challenges.
- Resolve conflicts peacefully and act with integrity, honesty, and good citizenship.
- Report concerns related to safety, bullying, harassment, or other behaviors that may negatively impact the school community.

Rights of Families

Paterson Public School recognizes that parents and guardians are essential partners in the educational process. Every parent or guardian has the right to:

- Participate actively in planning and supporting their child's educational program and academic progress.
- Access and review their child's educational records in accordance with federal and state laws and district procedures.
- Receive timely, accurate, and meaningful information regarding their child's academic performance, attendance, behavior, and school activities.
- Communicate with teachers, counselors, administrators, and other school personnel regarding their child's educational needs and progress.
- Visit their child's school and participate in school activities in accordance with school safety procedures and visitor protocols.
- Be informed of disciplinary actions, safety concerns, and other matters affecting their child, consistent with district policies, regulations, and due process procedures.
- Be treated with respect and have opportunities to provide input regarding school programs, policies, and initiatives.

Responsibilities of Families

Parents and guardians play a critical role in supporting student success and fostering a positive partnership between home and school. Every parent or guardian has the responsibility to:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly, arrives on time, and is prepared to learn each day.
- Foster the importance of education, attendance, responsible behavior, and academic effort.
- Treat school employees, students, and other families with respect, professionalism, and courtesy.
- Take an active role in their child's education by monitoring academic progress, maintaining communication with school staff, and participating in school-related activities when possible.
- Help their child establish routines and goals that support academic achievement, positive behavior, and long-term success.
- Reinforce school and district expectations regarding student conduct and citizenship.
- Seek assistance from school personnel when concerns arise or when additional support is needed to meet their child's educational, behavioral, or social-emotional needs.
- Provide the school district with current and accurate contact information, including address, telephone numbers, emergency contacts, and any updates necessary to ensure effective communication.
- Partner with school staff to promote a safe, supportive, and productive learning environment for all students.

Rights of Teachers

Teachers are essential members of the educational community and play a critical role in fostering student achievement and school success. To effectively fulfill their professional responsibilities, teachers are entitled to a supportive, respectful, and collaborative work environment. Every teacher has the right to:

- **Be treated as a valued professional**, with respect, dignity, and courtesy by students, families, colleagues, administrators, and members of the school community.
- **Work in a safe, secure, and supportive environment** that promotes effective teaching, learning, and professional growth.
- **Have access to the resources, equipment, technology, instructional materials, and support services** necessary to perform their duties effectively and meet the diverse needs of students.
- **Participate in meaningful collaboration** with parents/guardians, administrators, counselors, and support staff to address the academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs of students.
- **Receive timely and relevant information** regarding student discipline matters, including outcomes of disciplinary actions that impact their classroom environment and instructional responsibilities.
- **Maintain authority within the classroom** to establish and enforce reasonable expectations for student behavior consistent with school and district policies.
- **Be supported by school administration** in implementing classroom management practices and enforcing the Code of Student Conduct.
- **Express professional opinions and concerns** regarding student learning, school improvement, safety, and educational programs through appropriate channels.
- **Receive opportunities for professional development and continuous learning** to enhance instructional effectiveness and professional practice.
- **Work in an environment free from discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or retaliation**, consistent with district policies and applicable laws.

Responsibilities of Teachers

Teachers play a vital role in creating a positive, safe, and engaging learning environment that supports the academic, social, and emotional growth of all students. As professional educators and role models, teachers are expected to uphold high standards of conduct and excellence in instruction. Every teacher has the responsibility to:

- Arrive on time and prepared each day, ready to deliver high-quality, standards-based instruction that promotes student achievement and engagement.
- Demonstrate professionalism in all interactions and treat students, families, colleagues, and community members with dignity, respect, fairness, and courtesy.
- Model, teach, and reinforce positive behavioral expectations, helping students develop responsibility, self-discipline, and respect for others.
- Create and maintain a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment where all students feel valued, challenged, and empowered to succeed.

- Monitor, assess, and evaluate student progress regularly, using data to inform instruction and support individual learning needs.
- Communicate effectively and proactively with parents/guardians, staff, and administrators regarding student achievement, behavior, attendance, and support services.
- Partner with families by encouraging meaningful parent and guardian involvement in their child's educational experience and success.
- Provide appropriate academic and behavioral support to help students overcome challenges and reach their full potential.
- Collaborate with colleagues, support staff, and administrators to promote student success and contribute to a positive school culture.
- Consistently and fairly enforce the Code of Student Conduct and all school policies, while maintaining a focus on student growth, accountability, and restorative practices when appropriate.

Through these responsibilities, teachers help ensure that every student has access to a high-quality educational experience and a school environment that promotes learning, respect, and success.

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 AI

As technology continues to evolve, students are increasingly encountering Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in their academic and personal lives. These tools can support learning by helping students brainstorm ideas, practice skills, conduct research, and receive feedback on their work.

Our goal is to help students use AI responsibly, ethically, and appropriately. AI should be viewed as a learning aid—not a replacement for critical thinking, creativity, or independent work. Students are expected to follow our district’s academic integrity policy # 5701 and complete assignments according to teacher expectations.

To support responsible AI use, we encourage students to:

- Use AI as a tool to enhance learning, not to complete work on their behalf.
- Verify information generated by AI, as it may sometimes be inaccurate or incomplete.
- Protect their privacy by not sharing personal, confidential, or sensitive information with AI platforms.
- Follow teacher guidance regarding when and how AI tools may be used for assignments.

Families play an important role in helping students develop healthy digital habits. We encourage you to discuss responsible technology use at home and to ask your child about the digital tools they use for learning.

As AI technology continues to develop, our schools will remain committed to teaching students how to use these tools safely, ethically, and effectively while maintaining high academic standards.

Student Demonstrations

The Paterson Public School District recognizes and supports student voice and self-advocacy. It is our responsibility to ensure the health and safety of all stakeholders during these activities. The following guidelines outline how these activities can be conducted:

Students' Rights:

- Free speech and peaceful assembly are protected under the U.S. Constitution and are considered rights, not privileges.
- Students retain their rights within the school environment.
- The use of symbolic expressions and silent protest is protected.
- Viewpoint discrimination is prohibited.
- Penalties imposed must be proportional and content neutral.

District Responsibilities:

- Ensure the safety and welfare of all students and staff.
- Provide uninterrupted delivery of the educational program.
- Protect students holding opposing viewpoints.
- Comply with federal and state laws (e.g., Title IX, HIB).
- Maintain order and prevent substantial disruptions.

The district may impose content-neutral restrictions regarding the time, place, and manner of demonstrations. We will NOT suppress speech based on viewpoints or subject matter.

Time Restrictions:

Demonstrations may be limited to non-instructional times, such as before or after school, during lunch, or during passing periods, to avoid disruptions to the school day.

Manner Restrictions:

Demonstrations must remain non-obstructive. Students may not block hallways, doors, or emergency exits, and amplified sound is prohibited without permission.

Prohibiting Hate Speech and Obscenity:

Speech that targets protected classes, constitutes a true threat, or is deemed obscene falls outside First Amendment protection and may be prohibited.

Place Restrictions:

Specific venues on school grounds—such as athletic fields, auditoriums, or common areas—will be designated for safe management, security, and monitoring of demonstrations.

Prior Notice Requirement:

We require reasonable advance notice to the building principal to allow for safety planning. Notice requirements must be reasonable in scope.

Visitor Exclusion:

Outside attendees and community members may be barred from school property during demonstrations. The school is not a public forum for non-students.

The Rights of Nonparticipating Students:

The Right to Dissent: Students who disagree with a demonstration have an equal First Amendment right to express their opposing viewpoint peacefully, and within the same time, place, and manner framework.

The Right to Learn: Students who do not wish to participate in or observe a demonstration have a right not to be disrupted in their educational environment.

Protection from Intimidation and Harassment: When a demonstration appears to target harassment, intimidation, or bullying of specific students, our HIB and anti-harassment safeguards will be enforced in accordance with Policy 5512 and the N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7-9.

No Heckler's Veto: The hostile reaction of other students to a demonstration cannot by itself justify suppression of the speech.

Viewpoint Neutrality is Critical: Any restrictions imposed on one group's demonstration must be applied equally to all groups.

Use of Internet-Enabled Devices and Security Devices

On January 8, 2026, Governor Murphy took a significant step to enhance the educational environment by signing legislation that regulates the use of internet-enabled devices, including cell phones, within New Jersey's public schools. This law is designed to be effective during the regular school day, while students are on school buses, and at school-sponsored events when they are under the close supervision of school staff.

As a direct response to this legislation, our school will initiate a comprehensive "Bell to Bell" policy beginning with the 2026–2027 school year. Under this new policy, all students from Kindergarten through Grade 12 will be prohibited from using personal internet-enabled devices throughout the entire school day. This prohibition extends to non-instructional times, including lunch periods, transitions between classes, study halls, and various other school-related activities that take place during school hours.

While the law restricts general usage, it does allow for the use of internet-enabled devices under specific circumstances, including:

- To meet the accommodations defined in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), which ensures that students with disabilities receive the necessary support to succeed.
- To aid in the implementation of a 504 Plan, designed to provide equal access to education for students with specific needs.
- To comply with a documented health plan that necessitates the use of an internet-enabled device for monitoring or addressing a medical condition. In such cases, appropriate documentation from a healthcare professional must be submitted to the school.
- To facilitate translation services for non-English speakers.

In addition to the regulations, other types of privately owned technology are generally prohibited on school premises, barring special permissions granted by the school principal. It is important to note that the District does not provide access to its computer networks for privately owned devices

and assumes no responsibility for any losses or damages that may occur. Furthermore, if a student is found responsible for losing or having District-issued technology stolen, the District may impose disciplinary actions or financial obligations on the student.

Students are expected to demonstrate reasonable care and good judgment when navigating the complex landscape of technology and electronic communications. School administrators reserve the right to review websites visited or electronic files stored on District devices and networks. Additionally, students should be aware that electronic surveillance systems have been installed in all school buildings and on school grounds as part of a commitment to ensuring the safety and security of our school community. Consequently, while a limited expectation of privacy exists in school and on school grounds, there is no expectation of privacy while utilizing the District's technology resources.

It is important to respect others' privacy; therefore, video or audio recordings of students or staff members made without prior consent may infringe on individuals' privacy rights and disrupt the educational setting. Furthermore, personally identifiable information—including students' names, photos, addresses, email addresses, phone numbers, and locations—cannot be recorded or shared without the explicit consent of the students involved and their parents.

As a result, students are strictly prohibited from activating or using audio or video recording devices or transmitters on school grounds during the school day, while on school transportation, or at any school events or sponsored activities, except during emergencies or with prior approval from school staff, along with proper parental consent.

If a student receives permission from a staff member to capture or transmit any audio or video recording of a school-sponsored activity where other students or staff members are present, they are also required to obtain consent from every other student and their parents, as well as staff members whose voices or images may appear in the recording.

Finally, parents who wish to grant their children permission to participate in publicity opportunities must complete and return the Media Release and Permission for Student Publicity form, which can be found at the end of this Handbook. This allows for transparency and ensures that all families are informed and consenting to this process.

Students who fail to adhere to our established policies and procedures will be disciplined according to our district code of student conduct

Policy#5516: STUDENT USE OF INTERNET-ENABLED DEVICES (M)

The Board of Education prohibits student use of internet-enabled devices on school grounds during the school day in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:36-40b. The Board adopts this Policy and Regulation 5516 pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-40b. and the guidelines developed by the Commissioner of Education concerning student use of internet-enabled devices during regular school hours, on a school bus, or during school-sponsored events when the student is under the direct supervision of a teaching staff member or employee of the Board.

For the purpose of this Policy and Regulation 5516:

1. “Bell-to-bell” means the timeframe when the bell rings at the start of the school day until the dismissal bell rings at the end of the academic day. Bell-to-bell includes time in between class periods and lunch.
2. “Digital citizenship” means the development of thoughtful, empathetic citizens who can wrestle with important ethical questions at the intersection of technology and humanity. Model digital citizens focus on using technology to make communities better, engage respectfully online with others, and leverage technology to amplify voices and perspectives. They are careful to determine the validity of online sources of information and are always respectful of ideas different than their own.
3. “District-managed tools” means school-issued technology or platforms used for educational purposes (e.g., laptops, tablets, learning management systems, etc.).
4. “Internet-enabled device” means any device capable of connecting to the internet and accessing online content (e.g., smartphones, tablets, smartwatches, smart glasses, etc.), including social media applications. An internet-enabled device does not include an internet-enabled device provided by the Board when used for educational purposes.
5. “Non-internet-enabled device” means a basic communication device that is not capable of connecting to the internet or enabling the user to access content on the internet (e.g., basic flip-style cell phones, two-way radio/walkie-talkie, etc.).
6. “School grounds” means and includes land, portions of land, structures, buildings, and vehicles, not to include school buses, owned, operated, or used for the provision of academic or extracurricular programs sponsored by the district or community provider and structures that support these buildings, such as school wastewater treatment facilities, generating facilities, and other central facilities including, but not limited to, kitchens and maintenance shops. “School grounds” also includes athletic stadiums; swimming pools; any associated structures or related equipment tied to such facilities including, but not limited to, grandstands; greenhouses; garages;

facilities used for non-instructional or non-educational purposes; and any structure, building, or facility used solely for school administration. “School grounds” also includes other facilities as defined in N.J.A.C. 6A:26-1.2; playgrounds; and other recreational places owned by local municipalities, private entities, or other individuals during those times when the school district has exclusive use of a portion of such land.

A student’s use of an internet-enabled device on a school bus or during school-sponsored events when the student is under the direct supervision of a teaching staff member or employee of the Board will be in accordance with the age-appropriate and grade-level differentiated requirements outlined in Regulation 5516.

District-issued technology and sponsored platforms are permitted to be used in classrooms for educational purposes. The district may use existing information technology systems to proactively establish and monitor restrictions to the district’s network. The district may utilize device management software to restrict or monitor student browsing on school-issued devices or from devices connecting to the district’s Wi-Fi. If the district chooses to use software or other technology to block students’ use of their internet-enabled devices, the district may collaborate with the local municipality to determine that there are no safety or security concerns. The Board shall notify students and parents about the monitoring practices in Policy and Regulation 2361.

The Board shall assume no responsibility for the security of or damage to a student’s internet-enabled device brought onto school grounds. If a student brings an internet-enabled device to school, the internet-enabled device must remain off and may be required to be stored in a storage system as indicated in Regulation 5516. An internet-enabled device required to be stored in a district storage system shall be password protected by the student so only the student owner of the internet-enabled device can use the internet-enabled device.

The district shall provide instruction aligned to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) on Digital Citizenship and shall ensure classroom instructional time is entirely free of internet-enabled devices. Teachers shall not incorporate students’ personal technology into lesson plans. All digital engagement shall occur through district-managed tools and devices.

The district shall communicate behavioral expectations for student use of internet-enabled devices to students and their parent(s) and reinforce these behavioral expectations throughout the school year. Communication of this Policy and Regulation 5516 may include, but not be limited to, school-wide notifications, signage, and reinforcement as part of classroom routines.

The district shall comply with all applicable State and Federal laws that protect the rights of students with disabilities or health related needs, including, but not limited to, the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Students shall be permitted to use their internet-enabled device on school grounds during the school day, on the school bus, and at school-sponsored events in the following circumstances in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:36-40b.:

1. To fulfill accommodations provided in a student's individualized education program (IEP);
2. To support the implementation of a 504 Plan;
3. To implement a student health plan established to monitor or address a student's health condition (upon submission by a parent of documentation from a healthcare professional indicating that the use of an internet-enabled device is necessary for the health or well-being of the student);
4. For translation services;
5. For a student caregiver who is routinely responsible for the care or well-being of a family member;
6. When no reasonable alternative to the use of the internet-enabled device for a specific purpose exists (upon authorization by the Superintendent, Principal, or designee);
7. When required by law; and
8. In the event of an emergency.

The Superintendent or designee will inform students and parents of their right to request an internet-enabled device accommodation. The parent(s) shall submit a written request to the Superintendent or designee. The written request shall include, but not be limited to, supporting documentation from the student's physician, child study team, and/or any other documentation as required by the Superintendent or designee as to why the student requires an internet-enabled device accommodation. The Superintendent or designee shall inform the parent(s) of the approval or denial of the written request for an internet-enabled device accommodation within five school days of receiving the written request. The Superintendent or designee shall base such an accommodation determination on documented educational, medical, developmental, accessibility, or other needs or specific purposes and review them on a regular basis.

The Superintendent or designee may involve school nurses, case managers, and IEP/504 coordinators in planning for and implementing internet-enabled device accommodations. Staff responsible for implementation shall have ready access to documentation of the accommodation and shall ensure their enforcement strategies minimize disruption. The district shall develop and disseminate clear procedures to ensure staff implement internet-enabled device accommodations confidentially. Staff training may be necessary to recognize and honor valid internet-enabled device accommodations without drawing unnecessary attention to the student. Staff shall treat students

with an internet-enabled device accommodation with sensitivity and dignity. As appropriate, the district may develop one-page “internet-enabled device use summaries” for staff to ensure awareness while maintaining student confidentiality.

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.1, the district has developed and implemented comprehensive plans, procedures, and mechanisms that provide for safety and security in the district’s schools. School safety plans include thoughtful integration of internet-enabled device procedures during emergencies or perceived threats. The district has incorporated clear expectations into school safety plans, emergency drill protocols, and staff professional development.

In the event of an unplanned emergency closure that prevents students from retrieving stored internet-enabled devices, the district shall develop and communicate a clear, centralized protocol for retrieving stored internet-enabled devices safely and efficiently once the school building is accessible.

In the event of a family emergency or for non-emergency communication, families shall contact the school’s main office directly rather than reaching out to students during the school day. District staff will then follow local notification procedures to ensure the student receives the information in a timely and appropriate manner.

When a student leaves school grounds, whether for an open lunch period, internship, or other purpose, the student may be permitted to use their internet-enabled device. However, upon returning to school grounds, the student’s internet-enabled device must be stored for the remainder of the school day in accordance with Regulation 5516.

The district shall ensure students, parents, and school staff members are aware of this Policy and Regulation 5516 and understand how this Policy and Regulation 5516 apply to them. The Board shall include information about this Policy and Regulation 5516 in student handbooks.

R 5516: STUDENT USE OF INTERNET-ENABLED DEVICES (M)

The following provisions shall govern student use of internet-enabled devices on school grounds during the school day. The policy and this regulation shall be implemented in an age-appropriate manner, with procedures, communications, and consequences tailored as appropriate to the developmental needs of students at different grade levels.

A. Kindergarten through Grade 12

- 1.** Students in Kindergarten through grade 12 are prohibited from using an internet-enabled device on school grounds during the school day, other than District-managed tools.

2. It is the student's responsibility to turn off the internet-enabled device and have the internet-enabled device password protected to prevent any unauthorized use of the device.
 - a. Each student who brings an internet-enabled device to school is expected to turn off their internet-enabled device and store it in their backpack, locker, or other bag throughout the entire school day. The District may implement or pilot an application-based or other technological system that restricts access to or use of personal internet-enabled devices during the school day. Such a system may supplement these storage requirements or, upon a determination that it effectively prevents device use throughout the school day, serve as an alternative method of compliance.
3. If a student brings a personal device to school, the student assumes the risk of damage, theft, or loss of the device. The school district is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged devices.
4. Students shall be permitted to use their internet-enabled device on a school bus on their way to school at the start of the school day or on their way home from school at the end of the school day.
5. Students shall be permitted to use their internet-enabled device on school grounds before the start of the regular school day and on school grounds after the regular school day.
6. Students shall be permitted to use their internet-enabled device during school-sponsored events off school grounds during the school day while under the direct supervision of a school staff member or employee of the Board (e.g. field trip) after determining no reasonable alternative to the use of the internet-enabled device at school-sponsored events off school grounds during the school day exists only with the authorization of the Superintendent or designee.
7. Students shall be permitted to use their internet-enabled device during school-sponsored events taking place outside of the school day when students are under the direct supervision of a school staff member or employee of the Board (e.g., afterschool club meeting, sport team practice/game, etc.).
8. Students are prohibited from using non-internet-enabled devices. "Non-internet-enabled device" means a basic communication device that is not capable of connecting to the internet or enabling the user to access content on the internet (e.g., basic flip-style cell phones, two-way radio/walkie-talkie, etc.).

9. Discipline

- a. School staff members shall apply clear, age-appropriate consequences and use strategies to redirect students who use internet-enabled devices in violation of this Regulation and Policy 5516.

(1) First Offense in a School Year

- (a) The internet-enabled device shall be taken from the student by a school staff member or employee of the Board and turned in to the Principal or designee's office for the remainder of the school day.
- (b) It is the student's responsibility to turn off the internet-enabled device and have the internet-enabled device password protected to prevent any unauthorized use of the internet-enabled device before turning the internet-enabled device in to the school staff member or employee of the Board.
- (c) The student will be permitted to pick up the internet-enabled device in the Principal or designee's office at the end of the school day.
- (d) The student will have the internet-enabled device returned upon signing an acknowledgment of their first offense in a school year in violation of this Regulation and Policy 5516.
- (e) The following discipline will be imposed on a student for a first offense in a school year in violation of the provisions in this Regulation and Policy 5516: see Code of Student Conduct, Category 1 offenses.

(2) Second Offense in a School Year

- (a) The internet-enabled device shall be taken from the student by the school staff member or employee of the Board and turned in to the Principal or designee's office for the remainder of the school day.
- (b) It is the student's responsibility to turn off the internet-enabled device and have the internet-enabled device password protected to prevent any unauthorized use of the internet-

enabled device before turning the internet-enabled device in to the school staff member or employee of the Board.

- (c) The internet-enabled device must be picked up at the Principal or designee's office by a parent at the end of the school day.
- (d) If the parent cannot pick up the internet-enabled device by the end of the school day, the parent may pick up the internet-enabled device before the end of the next or any subsequent school day.
- (e) The parent shall be required to sign for receipt of the internet-enabled device with notice provided of a second offense in a school year for their child.
- (f) The following discipline will be imposed on a student for a second offense in a school year in violation of the provisions in this Regulation and Policy 5516: see Code of Student Conduct, Category 1 offenses.

(3) Third Offense in a School Year

- (a) The internet-enabled device shall be taken from the student by the school staff member or employee of the Board and turned in to the Principal or designee's office for the remainder of the school day.
- (b) It is the student's responsibility to turn off the internet-enabled device and have the internet-enabled device password protected to prevent any unauthorized use of the internet-enabled device before turning the internet-enabled device in to the school staff member or employee of the Board.
- (c) The internet-enabled device must be picked up at the Principal or designee's office by a parent at the end of the school day.
- (d) If the parent cannot pick up the internet-enabled device by the end of the school day, the parent may pick up the internet-enabled device before the end of the next or any subsequent school day.
- (e) The parent shall be required to sign for receipt of the internet-enabled device with notice provided of a third offense in a school year for their child.

- (f) The following discipline will be imposed on a student for a third offense in a school year in violation of the provisions in this Regulation and Policy 5516: see Code of Student Conduct, Category 2 offenses (repeated occurrence of Category 1 offense).

(4) Fourth Offense in a School Year

- (a) The internet-enabled device shall be taken from the student by the school staff member or employee of the Board and turned in to the Principal or designee's office for the remainder of the school day.
- (b) It is the student's responsibility to turn off the internet-enabled device and have the internet-enabled device password protected to prevent any unauthorized use of the internet-enabled device before turning the internet-enabled device in to the school staff member or employee of the Board.
- (c) The internet-enabled device must be picked up at the Principal or designee's office by a parent at the end of the school day.
- (d) If the parent cannot pick up the internet-enabled device by the end of the school day, the parent may pick up the internet-enabled device before the end of the next or any subsequent school day.
- (e) The parent shall be required to sign for receipt of the internet-enabled device with notice provided of a fourth offense in a school year for their child.
- (f) The following discipline will be imposed on a student for a fourth offense in a school year in violation of the provisions in this Regulation and Policy 5516: see Code of Student Conduct, Category 2 offenses (repeated occurrence of Category 1 offense).

- 10.** Students are strictly prohibited from recording audio or video of any other student or staff member without the prior consent of the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) or the staff member. This applies in all locations and circumstances, not just areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy. This also applies to personal devices as well as District-managed tools. Violations of this provision will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct and may result in additional consequences, as well as confiscation.

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.

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

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

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**.

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?

Paterson Public School is dedicated to fostering and maintaining a safe, supportive, and academically enriching environment where every student has the opportunity to learn, grow, and achieve success. Regular school attendance plays a critical role in student academic performance, social development, and overall well-being.

To support student success, families, students, and staff should be aware of the definition of **chronic absenteeism**. For students in grades K–12, a student is considered **chronically absent** when they miss **10% or more of the school year**, regardless of whether the absences are excused or unexcused. In a typical 180-day school year, this equates to approximately **18 days of missed instruction**, or as few as **two days per month**.

Research consistently shows that frequent absences can negatively impact academic achievement, classroom engagement, and long-term educational outcomes. By working together—students, families, educators, and community partners—we can promote consistent attendance, remove barriers to school participation, and ensure that every student benefits from the full educational experience offered at Paterson Public School.

Regular attendance matters, and every school day provides valuable opportunities for learning, relationship building, and personal growth.

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

APPENDIX C

Grade 3 – 12

Category I	
Infraction	Definition
Unauthorized use of a personal electronic or internet-enabled device	Use of, or failure to keep powered off and stored, any personally owned cell phone, smartphone, tablet, smartwatch, smart glasses, internet-enabled device, or similar electronic communication technology, from the start of the school day through dismissal, except as authorized by District policy.
Violation of dress code	Failure to comply with 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 school identification card upon request	Failure to produce 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.
PENALTIES Notification of parent/guardian, possible referral to counseling. Possible detention before/after school, at lunch, or on Saturday.	

Category II	
Infraction	Definition
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 of 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.
Unauthorized use of District-issued technology	Use of District-issued electronic devices or systems 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.

PENALTIES

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.

Category III	
Infraction	Definition
Repeated recurrence of a Category II offense	
False fire alarm, bomb threat, or tampering with the alarm system	Any act that causes an alarm for fire, bomb, or other hazardous condition to sound where no emergency exists or that causes such alarm to be disabled for any period of time.
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.
Substance abuse policy violation ^T	Violation of District policies on drugs or alcohol in school or at off-site school functions.
Arson	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 explosive device*	Possession, transfer, or detonation of any explosive device on school grounds.
Academic dishonesty	Cheating, plagiarism or other use of another's academic work without proper source citation.

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 DCPD, to HIB Officer, to counseling, or to Child Study Team. Possible detention before/after school, at lunch, or on Saturday. Possible elimination of after-school activities. Possible expulsion. Possible in-school or out-of-school suspension for up to ten (10) days.

Referral to attend the district off-site out-of-school suspension center for up to 10 days.

[†] Mandatory referral for immediate medical examination in accordance with Policy 5530.

* 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)

Tardiness	
Number of Tardy Arrivals	Penalty
3	Written warning to parents and one (1) forty-minute detention before or after school, or at lunch.
5	Mandatory parental conference with school principal or classroom teacher and two (2) detentions before or after school, or at lunch.
6 or more	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.	

Skipping/Cutting School or Class	
Number of Classes Skipped/Cut	Penalty
1	1 st written warning to parents and one (1) forty-minute detention before or after school, or at lunch.
2	2 nd written warning to parents and three (3) forty-minute detentions before or after school, or at lunch.

3	3 rd written warning to parents and five (5) forty-minute detentions before or after school, or at lunch.
4	Mandatory parental conference with school principal and seven (7) forty-minute detentions before or after school, or at lunch.
5 or more	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)	

Absenteeism	
Number of Unexcused Absences	Penalty
2	After 2 days in September, the school administration will call the parent/legal guardian.
5 and 7	The parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will receive a telephone call from the attendance office.
10	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.
15	The parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will receive a telephone call from the attendance office.

18	A student is considered chronically absent by law. A mandatory attendance meeting with the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be scheduled at the school.
20	A student may be retained at grade level per board policy.
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.	

APPENDIX C

Charts of Student Attendance Penalties

HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SANCTIONS

Tardiness	
Number of Tardy Arrivals	Penalty
3	Written warning to parents and one (1) forty-minute detention before or after school, or at lunch.
5	Mandatory parental conference with school principal or classroom teacher and two (2) detentions before or after school, or at lunch.
6 or more	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.	

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

Absenteeism	
Number of Unexcused Absences	Penalty
2	After 2 days in September, the school administration will call the parent/legal guardian.
5 and 7	The parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will receive a telephone call from the attendance office.
10	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.
15	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.
18	A student is considered chronically absent by law. Another telephone call will be made to the parent(s)/guardian(s) from the attendance office.
20	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.	

Community Resources

Health Services

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