

SYSTEM-WIDE STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

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

Article 1 - Standards for Ethical and Responsible Behavior

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

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

Article 2 - Code of Conduct

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

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

Article 3 - General Behavior Expectations

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

1. Be courteous to fellow students, staff and visitors.
2. Respect the rights and privileges of other students and school staff.
3. Obey all Board policies and school rules governing student conduct.
4. Follow directions from school staff.
5. Cooperate with staff in maintaining school safety, order and discipline.
6. Attend school regularly.
7. Meet school standards for grooming and dress.
8. Respect the property of others, including school property and facilities.
9. Refrain from cheating or plagiarizing the work of others.
10. Refrain from vulgarity, profanity, obscenity, lewdness and indecency.

Article 4 – Discipline

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

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

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

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

See policies:

JICA - Student Dress Code

JK - Student Discipline

JKB - Detention of Students

JKD - Suspension of Students

JKE - Expulsion of Students

Article 5 - Expectations

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

A. Violence and Threats

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

See policies:

JICIA – Weapons, Violence and School Safety

EBCC – Bomb Threats

B. Weapons

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

See policy JICIA – Weapons, Violence and School Safety

C. Hazing

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

See policy ACAD – Hazing

D. Discrimination and Harassment/Sexual Harassment

Students should not discriminate against other students on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, national origin or disability. Nor should students harass one another on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, or national origin or disability. Sexual harassment is also prohibited. Discrimination and harassment are grounds for disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, as permitted by law.

See policies:

AC – Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

ACAA – Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students

ACAA-R- Student Discrimination/Harassment and Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures

E. Bullying and Cyberbullying

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

- 1) Has, or a reasonable person would expect it to have, the effect of: (a) Physically harming a student or damaging a student’s property; or (b) Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or damage to the student’s property;
- 2) Interferes with the rights of a student by: (a) Creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment for the student; or (b) Interfering with the student’s academic performance or ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or privileges provided by a school; or
- 3) Is based on actual or perceived characteristics or association with persons with these actual or perceived characteristics specified in the policy, and has the effects described above.

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

See policy:

JICK- Bullying and Cyberbullying

F. Drug and Alcohol Use

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

See policy JICH – Drug and Alcohol Use by Students

G. Tobacco Use

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

See policy:
ADC – Tobacco Use and Possession

See policies:
EEABB Student Conduct on School Buses
EEABB-1 - Student Conduct on School Buses-Rules

I. Computer/Devices/Internet Use

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

See policy:
IJNDB –Use of School-Issued Computers, Devices, and the Internet

J. Co-Curricular Code of Conduct

Students must follow all Board policies and school rules while participating in athletics and extra-curricular activities. In addition, a separate Code of Conduct has been developed governing the behavior of students participating in these activities. Students who violate the Co-Curricular Code of Conduct may be subject to suspension or removal from the team/activity as well as additional disciplinary action under applicable Board policies and/or school rules.

See policy:
JJI – Eligibility for Participation in Co/Extra Curricular-Activities

Article 6 - Removal of Disruptive/Violent/Threatening Students

1. Students who are disruptive, violent or threatening death or bodily harm to others may be removed from classrooms, school buses, or other school property when necessary to maintain order and safety. The staff member who orders the student removed should arrange to have the student escorted to the office or other designated location.
2. If a student does not comply with a staff member's order to leave, the staff member will contact an administrator, or, if not available, another suitable person, who shall respond promptly.
3. The responding administrator will take appropriate action.
4. Any use of physical restraint or seclusion of students must comply with applicable regulations and

Board policy.

See 20-A MRS § 4009 – Protection from Liability

See Comprehensive Health and Safety Emergency Management Plan

See MDOE Rule Chapter 33- Physical Restraint and Seclusion of Students

See JKAA/JKAA-R- Physical Restraint and Seclusion of Students

Article 7 - Special Services

A. Referral

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

See policies:

IHBAA – Referral/Pre-Referral Policy

IHBAC – Child Find

B. Review of Individual Educational Plan

The school shall schedule an IEP to review the IEP of a student who has been removed from class when:

- A. School officials and/or the parent believes the student may present a substantial likelihood of injury to themselves or others;
- B. The class removals are sufficient to constitute a change in the student's special education program; or
- C. School officials or the parent believes that the student's behavior may warrant a change in educational programming.

See policy: JKF – Disciplinary Removals of Students with Disabilities

Article 8 - Referrals to Law Enforcement Authorities

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

See policy KLG - Relations with Law Enforcement Authorities

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

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

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

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