#ONECAROLINE

CAROLINE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR

PARENT/GUARDIAN GUIDE

Caroline County PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ONE FAMILY. ONE VISION.

Caroline County Board of Education
Caroline County Board of Education
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Superintendent of Schools
Derek L. Simmons, Ph.D.

Administration
Tara Downes, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent of Instruction
Kirk Howie, Director of Student Services

Vision
We envision that every student will be prepared, empowered and inspired to thrive in an ever-changing and diverse world

Core Values
- Students must be educated to thrive in the world that will exist in their future.
- Students learn best in an empathetic, safe, and healthy environment.
- All students are entitled to equitable resources, services and opportunities to learn.
- Trust is built by acting honestly, openly, ethically and respectfully.
- Partnerships with and among students, staff, families and community are essential to our mission.
- Efficient and effective school system operations have an important impact on student learning.

Mission
In partnership with families and community, we prepare all students to achieve college, career, and life readiness through a challenging and progressive educational experience.

Goals
- Academic Excellence: Provide equitable access to relevant, engaging curriculum and experiences that develop the knowledge and skills needed for college, career, and life readiness.
- Wellness: Foster an environment that supports the social, emotional and physical well-being of students.
- Equity: Create equitable opportunities to learn by providing resources according to each student's unique needs.
- Communication: Ensure meaningful avenues of communication with and among students, staff, families and community.

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August 2024

Dear Families,

I am pleased to present the Caroline County Public Schools Code of Student Conduct Parent/Guardian Guide. This guide is a summary of the Caroline County Code of Student Conduct for parents/guardians to reference. The complete document may be found on the Caroline County Public Schools website in the documents section.

Our school system has worked to create a Code of Student Conduct designed to uphold the values of respect, responsibility, and safety within our educational community. As an integral part of our commitment to providing a nurturing and safe learning environment, the Code of Conduct outlines the expectations, rights, and responsibilities of all individuals within our school system, including students, staff, administration, and parents/guardians.

The guidelines include behavioral expectations for all, and provide strategies for prevention, intervention, and restorative approaches for student misconduct. It is our belief that in working together, we can provide the safe and supportive environments each of us wants for our students.

Thank you for being a partner in educating our children in Caroline County Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Derek L. Simmons, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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INTRODUCTION

The Caroline County Public Schools Code of Conduct is a guiding document designed to uphold the values of respect, responsibility, and safety within our educational community. As an integral part of our commitment to providing a nurturing and safe learning environment, the Code of Conduct outlines the expectations, rights, and responsibilities of all individuals within our school system.

The Code of Conduct outlines the rights and responsibilities of students, families, and school staff, as well as the consequences for violating these expectations. It provides a common understanding of acceptable behavior and outlines the steps that will be taken to address instances of misconduct or non-compliance.

School staff, families, and students are expected to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Conduct and to actively uphold its principles in their daily interactions. By working together in partnership, we can create a positive and supportive learning environment where all individuals feel valued, empowered, and respected.

This Parent/Guardian Guide is a summary of the Caroline County Code of Student Conduct for parents/guardians to reference. The complete document may be found on the Caroline County Public Schools website in the documents section.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

District Philosophy and Responsibility
Caroline County Public Schools is committed to providing a safe and equitable learning environment for all students. We believe that every student has the right to learn and thrive in an environment free from discrimination, harassment, and violence. It is our responsibility to create and maintain a culture of respect, inclusion, and support where all individuals feel valued and empowered to reach their full potential.

Responsibilities of the School Community
As members of the school community, we are all responsible for upholding the standards, laws, and expectations of the district. This includes adhering to the Code of Conduct, respecting the rights and dignity of others, and promoting a positive and supportive learning environment. We must actively work to prevent and address instances of bullying, discrimination, and other forms of misconduct, and report any concerns to the appropriate authorities.

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Rights and Responsibilities:

Students:

- Have the right to a safe and supportive learning environment.
- Are responsible for treating others with respect and kindness.
- Must follow school rules and regulations, including those outlined in the Code of Conduct.
- Have the right to express their thoughts and opinions in a respectful manner.
- Must report any instances of bullying, harassment, or other misconduct to school staff.
- Have the right to Due Process, which means being notified of the allegations, providing an explanation of the evidence, having an opportunity to respond, prompt parent notification of the violation and disciplinary consequences when the behavior results in a Level 2 or greater response.

Parents/Guardians:

- Have the right to be informed about their child's education and school activities.
- Are responsible for supporting their child's academic and behavioral development.
- Must ensure their child attends school regularly and arrives on time.
- Have the right to be involved in school decision-making processes.
- Must communicate with school staff regarding any concerns or issues affecting their child's education.
- Can request an appeal of disciplinary decisions that result in extended suspension, or expulsion as outlined in the COMAR 13A.08.01.11. The school system will adhere to the established timelines of the statute.

Teachers:

- Have the right to a safe and supportive work environment.
- Are responsible for creating engaging and inclusive learning experiences for all students.
- Must enforce school rules and regulations consistently and fairly.
- Have the right to expect respectful behavior from students and parents.
- Must communicate openly and effectively with students, parents, and administrators in a timely manner.

Administrators:

- Have the right to lead and manage the school in accordance with district policies and procedures.
- Are responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of all students and staff.
- Must address instances of misconduct or non-compliance with the Code of Conduct promptly and effectively.
- Have the responsibility to enforce disciplinary actions when necessary, in accordance with district policies and state laws.
- Must provide support and resources to students, parents, and staff to promote a positive and inclusive school climate.

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School Resource Officers:

- Are responsible for ALL criminal investigations originating on the school campuses when on duty.
- Will proactively patrol campuses, addressing any criminal activity where the safety and security of the school and/or its students and staff are potentially in jeopardy.
- Provide security information and other similar support to school faculty and staff to assist in planning student safety and security.
- Will be an active and contributing member of the school's Behavioral Threat Assessment team.

Bus Drivers:

- Have the right to a safe and respectful work environment, free from harassment and discrimination.
- Are responsible for safely transporting students to and from school and other activities in a timely manner.
- Must enforce bus safety rules and regulations to ensure the well-being of all passengers.
- Must promptly report any incidents of misconduct or safety concerns to school administrators and/or Transportation Supervisor.
- Must conduct their work in a professional manner and ensure they are respectful to students, parents, and other staff.

Support Staff:

- Have the right to work in a safe environment free from harassment and discrimination.
- Have the right to receive training and professional development opportunities.
- Have the right to fair treatment in workload and assignments.
- Have the responsibility to maintain professional conduct including confidentiality.
- Are responsible for collaborating with colleagues and administrators to promote a safe learning environment for students.

Interpretation and Translation of Rights

All written and oral notices required by this Code shall be in English and in the primary language spoken in the home, or other means of communication (i.e. texts or emails) used by the parents/guardians/caregivers. These means of communication may include assistive technology, American Sign Language, or other accommodations.

- All notices shall be made in simple and commonly understood words to the greatest extent possible.
- Students shall not interpret for parents/guardians/caregivers or CCPS staff.
- Students and parents/guardians/caregivers have a right to an interpreter in their primary language at all hearings and conferences held under this Code.

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- Meetings must be held, and translated documents must be provided, to caregivers and students who speak a language other than English within the same timeframe that they are held or provided to families who speak English.

PREVENTION EFFORTS AND SUPPORTS

CCPS is dedicated to fostering a positive school climate in every school within the district. Our approach emphasizes prevention efforts aimed at promoting a culture of respect, inclusion, and support. To achieve this, each school implements a comprehensive plan for building and maintaining a positive school climate, tailored to the unique needs and characteristics of its student body and community.

By implementing these prevention strategies and supports, our goal is to create a school climate where students feel safe, supported, and motivated to succeed.

As part of our larger discipline framework, we basically incorporate three evidence-based prevention strategies to support all students. Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Restorative Approaches, and Conscious Discipline are all frameworks and strategies used to promote effective behavior and social and emotional well-being. When used together, they create a holistic system leads to a more supportive and thriving school community.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) - Grades PreK-12
PBIS is a proactive approach to establishing the behavioral supports and social culture needed for all students in a school to achieve social, emotional, and academic success. PBIS:

- Involves defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate behaviors to create positive school environments.
- Typically includes clearly defined behavioral expectations, consistent reinforcement of desired behaviors, and systematic strategies for addressing challenging behaviors.
- Focuses on prevention rather than reaction, aiming to create a positive school climate where all students can thrive.

Restorative Approaches - Grades 6-12
Maryland school law requires that the primary purpose of any disciplinary measure is rehabilitative, restorative, and educational. Restorative Approaches, also known as restorative practices, focuses on resolving conflicts and repairing harm by bringing together those who have been affected by misconduct to address the impact of the behavior and find ways to repair relationships. This approach emphasizes accountability, empathy, and understanding rather than punishment alone. It may include circle discussions, mediation, and other processes that promote dialogue and understanding among students and between students and staff.

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Conscious Discipline - Grades PreK-8
Conscious Discipline is an approach that integrates social-emotional learning, discipline, and self-regulation into a comprehensive program designed to create a safe, connected, and problem-solving school culture. It:

- emphasizes teaching children essential life skills such as self-regulation, emotional management, empathy, and conflict resolution.
- provides strategies for educators to respond to challenging behaviors in a way that fosters emotional intelligence and builds positive relationships.

How These Programs Work Together:

PBIS provides the framework: PBIS establishes the foundational expectations and supports for behavior across the school, setting clear guidelines and providing consistent reinforcement for positive behaviors.

Restorative Approaches address conflicts and harm: When conflicts or harmful behaviors arise, restorative approaches provide a structured process for addressing them, focusing on repairing relationships and restoring the community.

Conscious Discipline builds social-emotional skills: Conscious Discipline complements PBIS and restorative approaches by teaching children the social-emotional skills they need to succeed, including self-regulation, empathy, and problem-solving.

Additional Prevention Supports are also incorporated such as

- Social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum and programs
- Counseling and mental health services
- Peer mediation and mentorship programs
- School-wide assemblies, activities, and events
- Culturally responsive practices
- Trauma-informed practices

BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION

Intervention programs and intervention practices are two related but distinct concepts in the context of addressing student needs in education. Both are essential components of CCPS's approach to student support and success.

Intervention programs are formalized, structured initiatives with specific goals and methodologies, designed to provide targeted support to students who require additional assistance. They may have:

- specific goals, methodologies, and timelines for implementation
- focus on areas such as behavior management (e.g., social-emotional learning programs)

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- provide specialized services for students with disabilities (e.g., Individualized Education Programs)
- involve multiple stakeholders working collaboratively, including teachers, counselors, specialists, and parents.

Intervention practices encompass a broader range of strategies and techniques that educators use to support students' academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs on a day-to-day basis. Intervention practices are often more flexible and adaptable, allowing educators to respond dynamically to individual student needs.
They are strategies, techniques, and approaches that educators employ on a daily basis to meet the diverse needs of students within the classroom or school setting. They can include restorative practices, counseling and mentoring, behavior contracts, and social skills training based on data.

In summary, intervention programs are formalized, structured initiatives with specific goals and methodologies, while intervention practices encompass a broader range of strategies and techniques that educators use to support students' academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs on a day-to-day basis. Both are essential components of CCPS's approach to student support and success.

Table 1: Behavior Intervention Programs and Practices, please see the complete Code of Student Conduct.

DISCIPLINARY RESPONSES

Procedural Requirements

Application of the Code of Student Conduct

The behavior intervention consequences set forth Student Code of Conduct apply to students at all times, while they are on CCPS property or attending a CCPS event.

CCPS property includes any school or other CCPS facility, including grounds owned or operated by CCPS, CCPS buses and other CCPS vehicles, and the facility and grounds of any CCPS-sponsored activity involving students.

Student conduct occurring outside school hours and away from school property may be subject to disciplinary action if the principal reasonably believes that the conduct threatens the health or safety of students or staff in the school setting or if conduct causes or is reasonably expected to cause substantial disruption or material interference with school activities.

Behavior intervention should be commensurate and appropriate to the related offense and encourage student learning and development. If a student has to do academic work as part of

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that action, the goal is to teach something of value that is related to the class the student is taking. It cannot be simply punitive.

A teacher cannot assign such work as a consequence, regardless of whether the student knows it or not. Rote work also is not allowed as a consequence. A teacher cannot make a student write a sentence over and over or copy from a dictionary. Writing a paper explaining why the student's actions were wrong is an example of an acceptable academic action. Grades will never be adjusted as a form of behavior intervention. However, according to CCPS Regulation IKA-RA, Grading and Reporting, if a student is engaged in academic dishonesty, the teacher may assign a zero.

Recess may only be withheld, at the discretion of the principal/designee, when students' safety is a concern (such as equipment or facility repairs or severe weather) and/or a child is at risk of harm to self or others. In addition, CCPS staff may not withhold food or food-related incentives as a disciplinary consequence.

An entire group of students cannot be disciplined for the actions of some members of the group. For example, if one student disrupts class, the teacher cannot give everyone in the class detention. This rule applies even if the person responsible for the actions is unknown.

A student can never be punished physically. However, under Maryland law, CCPS personnel may use reasonable force to break up a fight, prevent violence, or restrain a disruptive student on school premises or during a school-sponsored trip. The use of physical restraint is prohibited in CCPS, except under limited circumstances specified in CCPS Regulation JGA-RA, Classroom Management and Student Behavior Interventions.

Effective July 1, 2022, Maryland law expressly prohibits the use of seclusion under any circumstances in all public schools.

Factors Impacting Behavior Intervention and Safety Decisions

CCPS staff shall make behavior intervention decisions using clear, developmentally appropriate criteria, ensuring that consequences applied are proportional and consistent. In evaluating the totality of the circumstances, school staff should review the "Levels of Responses" with particular attention to the examples provided and consider the following criteria relating to the discipline of students:

1. The student's age (in Grades PreK-2, suspension and expulsion generally should not be used). Under Maryland state law, there are heightened restrictions on the suspension and expulsion of Pre-K–2 students. Principals/designees must consult with a school psychologist or other mental health professional to determine if there is an imminent threat of serious harm to other students or staff that cannot be reduced or eliminated through other interventions and supports.

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2. Previous serious behavior intervention infractions (including the nature of any prior misconduct, the number of prior instances of misconduct, and the progressive disciplinary measures implemented for such misconduct).
3. Cultural or linguistic factors that may provide context to understand student behavior.
4. The circumstances surrounding the incident.
5. Imminent threat of serious harm.
6. Other mitigating or aggravating circumstances such as references to, or the inclusion of, language or the display of images and/or symbols that promote hate or discrimination.

Using language or displaying images and/or symbols that promote hate may be considered as a factor that elevates the level of disciplinary response to incidents that include, but are not limited to, bullying, harassment, or intimidation, or destruction of property.

Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation

CCPS is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and respectful educational environment where the worth and dignity of individuals are valued and their safety and rights are protected. Behaviors that compromise this environment, interfere with school operations, or are otherwise contrary to the basic mission of our public schools will not be tolerated.

The school system takes a proactive approach to educating students and staff on what bullying is, what it looks like, and what should be done if it is suspected. Bullying, harassment, or intimidation exists when there is a sufficiently severe action or persistent, pervasive pattern of actions or statements, directed at an identifiable individual or group.

Students who believe that they have been subject to bullying, harassment, or intimidation or who have knowledge of employees or students who may be engaging in bullying, harassment, or intimidation should immediately report the problem to a teacher, counselor, or school administrator.

We encourage that all cases of bullying and harassment be reported by using the forms found below. All investigations must be conducted by school administration in a timely manner.

CCPS Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation Policy

Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation ONLINE Reporting

Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Report Form - English | Spanish | Haitian Creole

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Students Sent Home by the School Administration
If a student is sent home by the school administration for disciplinary reasons for part of a school day, that partial day is considered a suspension. If the school administration calls the parent to pick up the child due to the child's behavior and the child misses instruction, that is considered a suspension. There can be **no** undocumented disciplinary removals. All suspensions from the educational setting must be documented and count as either a half day or a full day of suspension and count toward the ten (10) cumulative days.

Documentation will include:
- the reason for the early dismissal, and
- the time of the early dismissal.

The parent / guardian is required to sign the student out when the student leaves school early.

Functional Behavioral Assessment
Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) includes the:
- identification of the functions of the problem behavior for the student;
- description of the problem behavior exhibited in the educational setting; and
- identification of environmental and other factors and settings that contribute to or predict the occurrence, nonoccurrence, and maintenance of the behavior over time.

Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBA) are completed under the direction of a school psychologist in collaboration with a school-based team (IEP, 504, Student Support Team) and the student's parents/guardians.

Regardless of the school-based team and child's placement or programming, parental consent is required in all cases prior to the completion of an FBA. School-based teams have 60 calendar days to complete an FBA (exception: for students with disabilities currently receiving special education services through an IEP, in which the IEP team has 90 days to complete an FBA).

Restraint and Seclusion
School personnel are encouraged to use an array of positive behavior interventions, strategies, and supports to increase or decrease targeted student behaviors. CCPS personnel shall only use exclusion or restraint after less restrictive or alternative approaches have been considered, and:
- attempted; or
- determined to be inappropriate.

Exclusion or restraint shall only be used in a humane, safe, and effective manner, without intent to harm or create undue discomfort and consistent with known medical or psychological limitations and the student's Behavior Intervention Plan.

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Law enforcement, judicial authorities, or school security personnel may also exercise their responsibilities, including the physical detainment of a student or other person alleged to have committed a crime or posing a security risk in accordance with relevant law, regulation, policy, or procedures. For more information, please see the complete Code of Student Conduct.

Levels of Responses

Consequences can be tailored to address individual circumstances; therefore, they may be listed below in more than one level. For more information, please see the complete Code of Student Conduct.

Behavior Intervention Matrix

This Behavior Intervention Matrix is based on the Maryland State Board of Education Code of Conduct. Some revisions have been made to conform to the behavior intervention, safety, and well-being philosophy and current practices of CCPS, as well as input from stakeholders. The matrix provides a suggested continuum of tiered responses to inappropriate or disruptive student behavior. School staff have the professional discretion to make disciplinary decisions that consider the totality of the circumstances and are consistent with the discipline philosophy, Board policies, CCPS' regulations as well as applicable federal and state laws. The matrix contains a list of potential inappropriate or disruptive behaviors (identified by state suspension code) and the appropriate interventions or consequences. It is meant to be utilized together with the preceding glossary and chart describing five different graduated levels of support, removal, and administrative responses to students' inappropriate or disruptive behaviors.

The behavior intervention levels described in the Behavior Intervention Matrix should be utilized as follows:

- In choosing one or more interventions or behavior intervention for inappropriate or disruptive behavior, school staff should locate that behavior on the matrix. Possible infractions include, but are not limited to, cited examples.
- On the first instance of any inappropriate or disruptive behavior, school staff shall first consider one or more interventions or disciplinary responses from the lowest level on the matrix.
- If the same behavior is repeated during the current school year, school staff should consider utilizing one or more interventions or disciplinary responses from the next highest level indicated on the matrix for that behavior, or any lower level, including appropriate Restorative Approaches.

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- Staff is encouraged to implement several lower-level interventions before proceeding to higher levels that may involve disciplinary responses that remove the student from the classroom.
- If a school administrator determines that there are unique or exceptional circumstances, or an imminent threat of serious harm to students or staff, that warrant an intervention or disciplinary response at a level that is above the highest level, the administrator must consult with the CCPS Supervisor of Student Services or Assistant Superintendent before taking action.

Law Enforcement Involvement
Law enforcement should be involved in disciplinary incidents in schools when there is a clear and immediate threat to the safety and security of students, staff, or the school community (see Maryland Education Code § 7-305.1). For more information, please see the complete Code of Student Conduct.

Reportable Offenses
The law enforcement agency is required to notify the Superintendent when a student is arrested for a reportable offense. State law lists the reportable offenses, which include criminal acts. The Superintendent or designee then notifies the principal of the school in which the student enrolled with the arrest information, including the charges. For more information, please see the complete Code of Student Conduct.

Reporting Delinquent Acts
Delinquent acts are offenses committed by a person who is under 18 years old which would be crimes if committed by an adult. School officials shall promptly report to the responsible law enforcement agencies all delinquent acts coming to their attention whether occurring on or away from the school premises which involve students attending the particular school.

Delinquent acts do not include conduct which has been traditionally treated as a matter of discipline to be handled administratively by the particular school, except that all conduct of a serious nature should be promptly reported to the parent or guardians concerned.

Due Process
Students must be afforded due process when discipline is administered. Due process includes:

1. Notifying the student of the allegations
2. Providing an explanation of the evidence
3. Allowing the student an opportunity to respond to the allegations
4. Notifying the parent/guardian promptly of the violation and disciplinary consequences when the behavior warrants reallocation of the student s time or exclusion from normal school activities.
5. Parents/Guardians can request an appeal of disciplinary decisions that result in extended suspension, or expulsion as outlined in the COMAR 13A.08.01.11. The school system will adhere to the established timelines of the statute.

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Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older (eligible students) certain rights with respect to your student's education records. For more information, please see the complete Code of Student Conduct.

Data Collection and Review **provides staff the process for documentation.** For more information, please see the complete Code of Student Conduct.

DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

This section is dedicated to exploring the laws and regulations surrounding discipline as it pertains to students with disabilities. For more information, please see the complete Code of Student Conduct.

For the following Tables, please see the complete Code of Student Conduct.

Table 3: Inappropriate And Disruptive Behaviors And Levels Of Response

Table 4: Offense Code Definitions

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