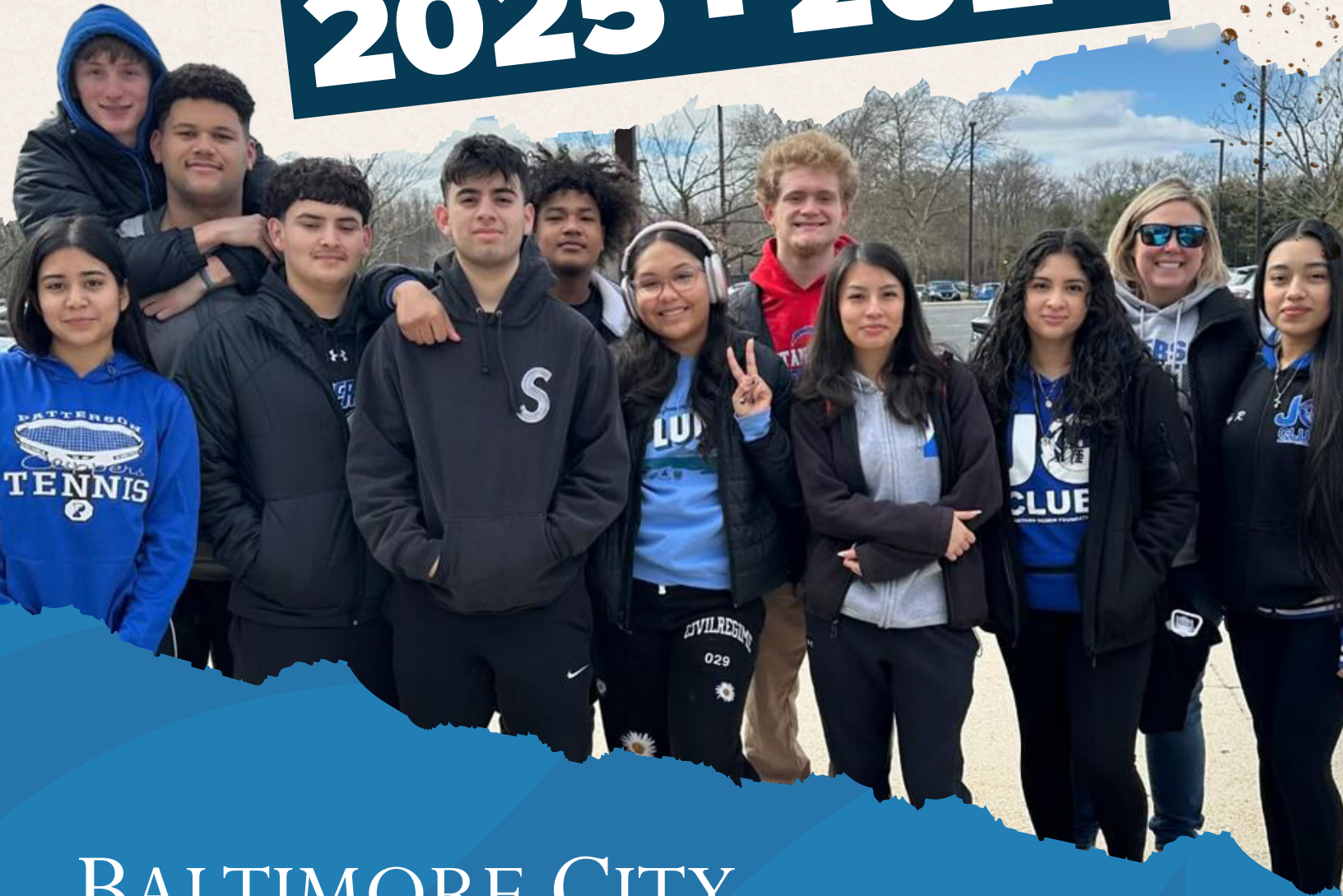


STUDENTS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES HANDBOOK 2025 - 2026



BALTIMORE CITY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Introduction

As a City Schools student, you have rights, or certain freedoms or protections. These rights define how you should be treated as a member of your school community. All students have these rights, and no one can take them away from you.

You also have responsibilities as a member of your school community. Responsibilities are the rules that you are expected to follow to support your own learning, health, and safety, as well as ways you should support others around you and help create a great school environment. We all look out for one another—that is what makes great school communities.

City Schools exists to help you develop the knowledge and skills you need to pursue the future that calls you. You have talent, dreams, and enormous potential. The rights and responsibilities handbook is designed to help you and your peers meet your potential.

This handbook is just a summary, and you may have other rights and responsibilities depending on the situation. Many of these topics are covered in City Schools' [Family Guide](#). The School Board policies, administrative regulations, and resources linked at the end of each section provide fuller explanations of your rights and responsibilities. All School Board policies and administrative regulations are also available on the [City Schools website](#). In this handbook, we refer to all these legal requirements as “City Schools rules.” City Schools rules can change, and when they do, they override the statements and references in this handbook. Also in this handbook, the term “parent” is used broadly to include foster parents and guardians.



Summary of Student Rights and Responsibilities

I. Access to free, well-rounded public education

Every young person in Maryland has the right to access a free, public school education. This right extends from age 5 until high school graduation or the end of the school year when a student turns 21. The School Board's mission is to provide you and your peers with a quality education that supports all parts of your development and equips you with the life skills and academic foundation you need to contribute to our changing society.

Enrollment

You have the right to attend City Schools if you live in Baltimore City. Once you get to middle and high school, you have the right to participate in the [Middle and High School Choice Process](#). Your school should provide you with all the information that you need to decide what the best school option is for your future and should support you and your family in navigating the choice process, if needed. As part of your responsibility, you are encouraged to educate yourself about this process and to do your best work so that you can select a school that fits your needs and interests.

Attendance

As a student, your number one priority and biggest responsibility each day is to attend school. This means arriving at school on time and attending every class on your schedule. At the same time, you have the right to have your absences excused. If you miss school, you are responsible for completing the work that you missed and turning that work in to your teacher. Students will be allowed at least the same number of days as they were absent to complete make-up work.

If you have challenges that make attending school difficult, it is your right to have your school provide you with your assignments to help you get back on track. You can also expect your school to work with you and your family to address issues that may be contributing to attendance challenges. Working together will help you, your family, and your school to create solutions to the challenges identified.

High-quality, rigorous, culturally responsive curriculum

You have a right to receive high-quality and challenging schoolwork that will prepare you with skills, knowledge, and understanding to succeed in college, career, and community and become an independent, creative, and compassionate leader of our community. You have a responsibility to do your best, ask questions in class, and push yourself and your classmates to learn as much as you can.

Your classes, schoolwork, and educational materials should be culturally responsive. That means they must honor your experiences, culture, and humanity. If you feel like the curriculum in your classes is not culturally responsive, you should speak to your teacher, your principal, or another adult you trust at your school.

Gifted and Advanced Learner screening

All students are capable of performing at a high level. Because of this, you have the right to be tested for the [gifted and advanced learner](#) program at your school. If you feel like you are not being challenged in your classes, you should speak to your teacher, your principal, or another adult that you trust at your school. You, your teacher, or your parent all have the right to request that you be tested for gifted status.

Academic services and support

Your teachers should push you to complete challenging classwork. At the same time, you have the right to get support from your school to help you reach the rigorous standards that are set for you. You should expect that school staff will build nurturing, supportive, and respectful relationships with you. If you feel like you need more support than you are getting, you can go to a trusted adult at your school to talk about how you can get the help you need. This could be a teacher, advisor, principal, assistant principal, counselor, social worker, or any other City Schools staff member. It is your right to work with City Schools staff to determine how to make the most of the support that is being offered to you. Please know that it is a good thing to ask for help, even if it may feel hard to admit that you need it.



Grading and reporting

You have a right to be graded in a way that is fair and consistent. Teachers should use different types of assessments so that you have a chance to show your knowledge and skills. Teachers must also provide for reassessments, after you have attended a coach class, made test corrections, or shown improved understanding in other ways. They should also update their gradebooks regularly in all courses, and at least weekly in Math, English/ English Language Arts (“ELA”), Science, Social Studies, and Career and Technical Education courses, so that you and your family can keep track of your grades and your progress toward graduation on the Campus Portal. If you or your family is concerned that the grade book is not being updated, you should reach out to your school.

You have a responsibility to complete all graduation requirements, such as course credits and service-learning hours.


You can learn more about the rights and responsibilities in this section of the handbook in Board Policies [ADA](#) (Equity), [IGE](#) (Curriculum), [IHBB](#) (Gifted and Advanced Learning), [IKA](#) (Grading and Reporting), [IKEA](#) (Promotion and Retention), [IKEB](#) (Graduation Standards), [JFA](#) (Residency, Non-Residency and Tuition), [JFB](#) (Student Enrollment), [JFBA](#) (The School Choice Process and Entrance Criteria), [JEA](#) (Compulsory Attendance), and [KCA](#) (Family and Community Engagement), as well as the accompanying administrative regulations. There is more information on these topics on the City Schools website at these links: City Schools [Portrait of a Graduate](#), [attendance](#), [school choice](#), [enrollment](#), [grading](#), [gifted and advanced learning](#), [graduation and promotion](#), and [curriculum](#).



II. Student wholeness

School is important, and it is a big part of your life. It is important that you do all you can to learn and succeed in all your classes. But you also have needs that go beyond learning English Language Arts, Math, and your other subject areas. You are a whole person with your own unique interests, passions, talents, experiences, emotions, and identity. You have a life outside of school, and it impacts how you show up at school.

Schools are expected to promote student wholeness. Your school should treat you and all your classmates as individuals, with unique experiences, talents, challenges, and social, emotional, and physical lives. As a student, you should have the opportunity to express your needs and concerns to your school leaders and staff and to have your voice heard. You should also expect that you and your family will be treated as partners in your education.



This is your education. Ask for help from a trusted adult when you need it—help with schoolwork, emotional issues, health concerns, conflicts with other students, or anything else that may be bothering you or getting in the way of your learning. Make safe, healthy choices in and out of school. Seek out your interests, develop your skills, and explore who you are and what you are passionate about.

Social-emotional learning and well-being

City Schools is committed to supporting you as you explore who you are, what your interests and passions are, and who you want to be in the world. This includes helping you build important social and emotional skills, such as the ability to manage stress and emotions, collaborate and work in teams, and make responsible decisions for your own well-being and that of the people around you. You share responsibility with adults in City Schools to work together so you can learn to be aware of your feelings, learn how your actions affect yourself and others, grow from your mistakes, and make good choices that support your success and help create a supportive school community.

Physical and mental health

As a student in City Schools, you have the right to receive support for your social, emotional, and physical health and development. This includes access to some health services and access to people who can support you—either inside the school or through a referral to an outside organization—if you are struggling with depression, anxiety, substance abuse, or other mental health concerns. You also have the right to learn through comprehensive health education classes that are appropriate to students at your grade level. You may be able to receive these services at school, through a telehealth appointment in some cases, or from a community partner. At the same time, you have a responsibility to maintain healthy relationships, tell a trusted adult when you need support, and ensure that your school remains a safe space by never bringing illegal drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products into school or onto school grounds. You also have the responsibility to manage carefully any medication that you may be authorized to carry or self-administer by your parent and the school health suite.

Moving your body regularly is an important part of staying healthy and being able to engage in learning. All schools must provide students with daily opportunities for physical activity—before, during, or after school. This may look different depending on your school and/or grade level. For elementary school students, you have the right to have recess each day, and recess may not be taken away from you as a punishment. Your responsibility as a student is to follow all rules regarding physical activity, recess, and use of the gym, sports fields, or other facilities. It is also your responsibility to move and play in a way that keeps you and the people around you as safe as possible.

Nutrition

Eating regular healthy meals is not only essential for your growth, it is also necessary for you to be able to focus on learning. As a student, you have access to healthy meals provided by your school and you have the right to have enough time to eat your meal (at least 30 minutes for lunch and at least 15 minutes for breakfast). It is your responsibility to know and follow all rules about when and where food may be eaten. It is also your responsibility to follow City Schools rules that prohibit students from using meal delivery services (such as DoorDash) during the school day. Finally, it is extremely important that you respect any rules against eating certain foods in an area where they are not allowed, because breaking that rule could put a student with an allergy in serious danger.

For additional mental health support the following resources are available: (1) Maryland Crisis Hotline. Students and families can call 1-800-422-0009 24 hours a day for help with drug and alcohol abuse, physical and sexual abuse, depression, loneliness, relationship difficulties, and other issues. (2) National Suicide Prevention Hotline. Students and families can call or text 998 24 hours a day for help with depression and other issues. 988lifeline.org. (3) Hazel Health. Students have access to virtual mental health support free of cost. Learn more here: getstarted.hazel.co/district/baltimorecityschools. (4) Safe Schools Maryland Hotline. Safe Schools Maryland is an anonymous tip reporting system that allow students, parents, and community members to easily report anonymous safety concerns anywhere in Maryland. Call 833-MD-B-Safe (833-632-7233) or visit safeschoolsmd.org.

For more information about student health services, including telehealth, see Administrative Regulation [ADF-RD](#) (Student Wholeness and Support Services). You can learn more about the rights and responsibilities in this section of the handbook in Board Policies [ADC](#) (Smoke and Vape-Free School Environment), [JLCDB](#) (Anaphylactic Allergies: Identification, Management, and Treatment in Schools), and [ADF](#) (Wellness, Nutrition, and Physical Activity) as well as the accompanying administrative regulations. There is more information on these topics on the City Schools website at these links: [meals and menus](#), [health services](#), and [City Schools' Portrait of a Graduate](#).



III. **Student voice, participation, and leadership**

Freedom of inquiry, speech, and expression

You have the right to explore challenging and controversial ideas in your classes and other school activities, form your own opinions, and freely express those opinions in your speech and writing. You have a responsibility to seriously consider the topics presented in your classes, respect other people's opinions, and evaluate information carefully as you form your viewpoints. When you express yourself at school, you must use respectful language and support a positive learning environment. You may not use obscene, libelous, slanderous, profane, vulgar, or lewd language, and you may not harass, threaten, intimidate, or materially and substantially interfere with or disrupt the classroom, school activities, or the school's operations.

You can organize performances and publish material in school newspapers and other media, as long as you follow City Schools rules. If your school has a newspaper, a student news channel, or another form of school-sponsored media, student journalists have a right to select the news, opinions, features, and advertising content. School administrators cannot deny publication or distribution, unless they can show that City Schools rules have been violated.

Petitions

If you have a concern and you feel like adults are not listening, you can start petitions outside of class time, as long as you do not disrupt learning and school operations. At the school level, students have a right to receive a response to their petitions within five school days.

You have the responsibility to make sure that petitions do not encourage actions that endanger the health or safety of anyone in your school community. You also have a responsibility to meet with your principal to clear up misunderstandings and discuss the topics of your petition. Petitions must follow the City Schools rules related to expressing student viewpoints (discussed above). If your petition violates these rules, your principal can stop your petition from circulating.

Freedom of assembly

You have a right to assemble (meet) with other students to discuss issues that are important to you. You may also protest peacefully. If you are planning an assembly or protest, you need to speak with your principal and work together with school staff to make sure it is orderly and safe. Often, a conversation ahead of time can clear up misunderstandings. School administrators may set reasonable limits on the time, place, and manner for these activities, and whether they will be allowed during the school day. It is your responsibility to make up any work you miss during the student assembly or protest.

Student government

Every high school is *required* to have a student government. Other schools are *strongly encouraged* to form student government organizations.

If your school has a student government, you have a right to vote in student elections. You also have a right to run for office in the student government if you meet the requirements that your school's student government holds for candidates.

If your school does not have a student government, you have a right to organize one. Organizing a student government is a way to increase students' voice and influence at your school. The student government has a right to:

- Prepare a constitution for approval by your principal.
- Provide input on the selection of an advisor, who receives a stipend or other incentives for their work.
- Be included in school decision-making.
- Have regular meetings with your principal.
- Submit recommendations to your principal and get a response within 5 days (unless it is a long recommendation, and everyone agrees on a different deadline).
- Get help accessing school facilities, like classrooms for meetings and printers for making copies.
- Have absences excused for approved activities.
- Get help from the principal's supervisor if the principal persistently fails to honor these rights.

Whether or not you are a member of student government, you have a responsibility to make sure that the student government is effective, accessible, and accountable to all students.

Participation in City Schools and school-level decision-making

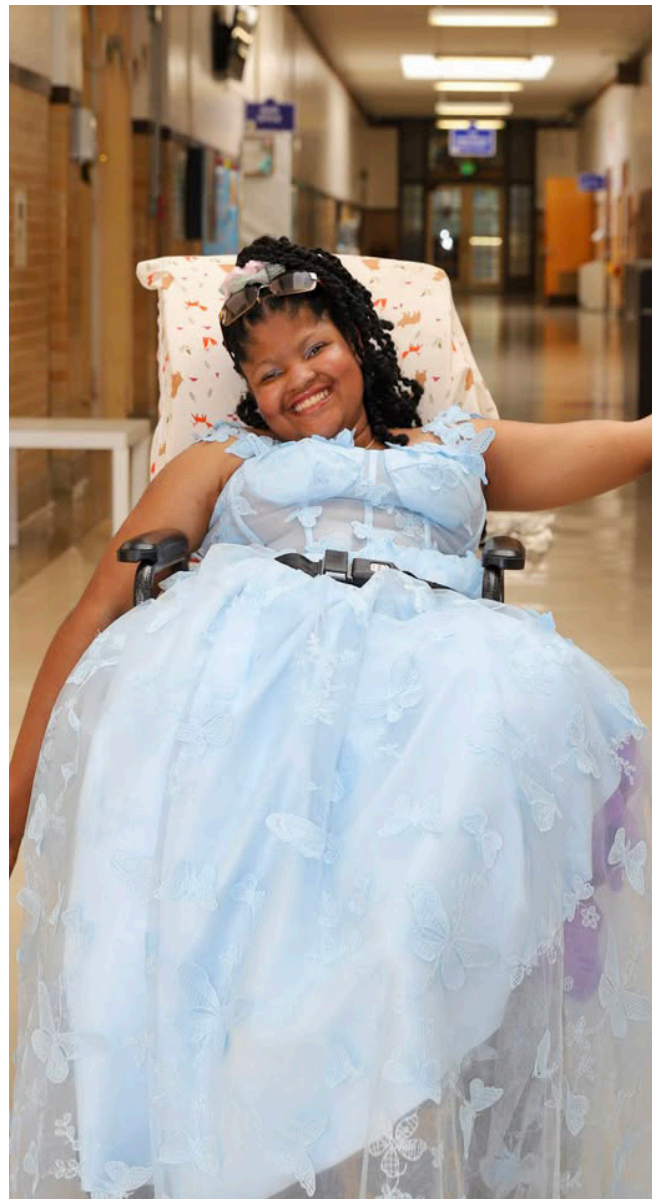
If you are a 6-12th grade student, you have a right to vote and run in the annual election for the [Associated Student Congress of Baltimore City](#) (ASCBC). ASCBC is the city-wide student government organization that is responsible for representing all City Schools students. Each school that serves 6-12th grade students should participate in the annual election for ASCBC and encourage their students to know the candidates and cast their vote.

Under state law, 9-12th grade students also have a right to vote for the Student Commissioner—the student who sits on the Baltimore City School Board and represents students' views. The School Board is a group of elected and appointed citizens who govern City Schools. They make the policies (the City Schools rules) that affect all schools in our district. You have a right to attend and speak (this is called “giving testimony”) at School Board meetings. You also have a right to give feedback on City Schools policies.

At your school, you have a right to review and give input on new school rules and changes to existing rules. Your principal should share new or revised school rules ahead of time and get students' input before putting them into action. If you are concerned about a rule at your school, you should speak to the principal or your student government.

You have a responsibility to stay informed about what is going on in your school, City Schools as a whole, and the broader Baltimore City community. If you are unsure of something, ask questions to make sure you understand City Schools rules and your school's rules. If you think something is unfair or ineffective, speak up. Always engage respectfully when raising concerns or challenging City Schools rules and your school's rules.

There are lots of other ways to be a student leader and have your voice heard. For example, at your school, you can participate in meetings of the School Family and Community Council, which brings together staff, parents, students, and community members to discuss school-level issues and programs.



Extracurriculars, student organizations, and athletics

You have a right to participate in extracurriculars, student organizations, and athletics if you meet the eligibility requirements set by your school.¹ Whether you are a student leader or a student athlete, you have a responsibility to set an example. You must meet all academic, attendance, and behavioral expectations and represent your school positively.

If your school does not have a club or organization that you want to join, you can start your own. You can apply to start an organization, use facilities (classrooms, announcements, copiers, etc.), and raise funds for your projects [using forms and resources located on the City Schools website](#). Your school should have a clear, fair, consistent process for you to do these things. Any funds should be maintained in an account in the school's student activity fund.

If your principal denies your request to form a student organization, they need to give you a written explanation of why they denied it so you can revise your application and try again. If your principal allows other student organizations to form and meet at your school, they cannot deny your organization based on the religious, political, philosophical, or other content of your group's speech. If you revise your application, and your principal still denies it, you can appeal their decision using the process discussed below.

School-sponsored organizations are student groups that directly relate to courses offered at the school. Examples are student government, the school's band or orchestra, the school's newspaper or yearbook, and groups that participate in debate, mock trial, and robotics competitions on behalf of their school.

Student-led organizations are all other student groups developed and led by students and approved by the school. Examples are religious, political, issue advocacy, and student affinity groups.

If you form a student-led organization, you are responsible for making sure that your meetings and activities are open to all students who support the organizations' mission and goals. You are also responsible for using school facilities and resources appropriately, operating safely and responsibly, and following City Schools rules.

At the beginning of the school year, schools should inform students and their families about the student organizations at the school. Schools should update this list. To avoid barriers to participation, written parent approval generally should not be required for middle and high school students to participate in student organization activities during the school day. However, parent permission may be required for field trips or other activities off school property or outside of the school day.

¹ Principals can decide which extracurricular activities have eligibility criteria and which do not. If they decide academic eligibility is required, 6-8th grade students must have no more than one grade below passing on the most recent report card, and 9-12th grade students must have a minimum GPA of 2.0 and no more than one grade below passing for the previous marking period. Principals can make an exception if they think a student will benefit academically from participating in an extracurricular activity.

To participate in interscholastic athletics (athletic competitions between schools), 10-12th grade students and repeat 9th grade students must have a minimum GPA of 2.0 in the previous marking period or a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 for the previous four marking periods. First-time 9th grade students are automatically eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics during the first grading period of high school. After the first grading period, first-time 9th grade students cannot have more than one grade below passing at the eligibility decision points. There are no academic eligibility requirements for 6-8th grade students to participate in middle school athletics.

Participation in political campaigns

City Schools recognizes the educational value of participating in the real-world application of the electoral process. Students in high school who participate in the election process during the regular school day will be marked as lawfully absent for a total of three school days per school year.

You are permitted to distribute campaign materials at school before or after the school day, as long as it does not interfere with the normal flow of traffic in school, but you may not distribute campaign materials during class time unless it is part of the assigned curriculum. Also, you may not distribute campaign materials that violate election laws, or if they will materially and substantially interfere with or disrupt the classroom, school activities, or the school's operations.

If a political candidate is invited to visit a school or attend a school-related activity during school hours, the other candidates for the same elected office should be invited to visit at the same time or be provided an equivalent time to visit.

Patriotic exercises

You will have the opportunity to participate in or watch patriotic exercises like the pledge of allegiance in school. You cannot be forced to participate in patriotic exercises and you cannot be punished or embarrassed if you do not participate. You have the responsibility not to interrupt others who are participating in patriotic exercises.

Complaints and appeals

At times, students may have concerns about what they experience at school. Your first step should be to follow up with your principal or another school administrator. Because your concerns deserve to be heard, it is your right to appeal decisions made by school administrators. An appeal is a formal request that the school's decision should be reversed or reconsidered.

When appealing, you are expected to follow the proper procedures and take all necessary steps. You also may reach out to the [CEO's Ombudsperson](#) to help resolve your concerns about City Schools rules.



You can learn more about the rights and responsibilities in this section of the handbook in Board Policies [BBAB](#) (Student Board Member Authority), [BLA](#) (Procedures in Appeals and Hearings Under Section 4-205 of the Education Article), [BLC](#) (Procedures in Appeals and Hearings Under § 7-305 of the Education Article [Student Discipline]), [KCA](#) (Family and Community Engagement), [IMDA](#) (Patriotic Exercises), [JICE](#) (Student Journalists – Freedom of Speech and Freedom of the Press), [JJA](#) (Student Organizations and Governance), [JJIC](#) (Academic Eligibility for Scholastic Athletics), Policy [JJJ](#) (Academic Eligibility For Extracurricular Activities), [JJL](#) (Student Participation in Political Activities), and [KEA](#) (Public Inquiries, Concerns, and Complaints), as well as the accompanying administrative regulations. There is more information on the City Schools website at these links: [athletics](#), [complaints](#), [student organizations forms and resources](#) (including appeals), and [youth leadership](#).



IV. **Equitable and fair treatment**

Equity

In June 2019, City Schools adopted an [Equity Policy \(ADA\)](#) in an effort to acknowledge that disparities contradict our beliefs and values about what students can achieve and the role of adults in ensuring conditions for success. This policy defines *Educational Equity* as an educational system that ensures that every student has access to the opportunities, resources, and educational rigor they need throughout their educational career to maximize academic success and social emotional well-being, and it views each student's individual characteristics as valuable.

You should expect that City Schools allocates resources to create equitable practices, systems, and structures to ensure that we provide equitable education and environments to all students, especially those that have been historically disenfranchised. Your voice as a student will guide our work to ensure your talents, dreams, and potential are fully maximized.

Equal educational opportunity and non-discrimination

The rights summarized in this handbook apply to all students regardless of race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, national origin, nationality, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, pregnancy or parenting status, family structure, ability (cognitive, social/emotional, and physical), veteran status, genetic information, age, immigration or citizenship status, socioeconomic status, language, or any other legally or constitutionally protected attributes or affiliations. You have the right to an education free from discrimination based on any of these actual or perceived personal characteristics. At the same time, you are expected not to discriminate against peers or school staff based on the same characteristics.

Discrimination undermines our community's efforts to promote equity and inclusion for all people. Discrimination includes sex-based harassment and other forms of bullying, harassment, or intimidation (discussed more below), as well as acts of hate, violence, insensitivity, disrespect, or retaliation—such as verbal abuse, slurs, threats, physical violence, vandalism, or destruction of property—that affect your learning environment. Discrimination also includes racism, sexism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, and other forms of institutional prejudice in all forms.

Serving pregnant and parenting students

Pregnant and parenting students should not be treated differently from other students. In fact, because pregnancy and parenthood present unique challenges, it is your right to receive the support that you need from your school in order to continue your education. It is also your right to speak with your teacher, principal, or an adult you trust at the school to create a plan for using available resources. Working together will help you, your family, and your school to create solutions that meet your needs.

Respecting religious diversity

City Schools is committed to the respect and appreciation for the religions, beliefs, and customs of our diverse student population. You have a right to an academic learning environment where religious beliefs are not advocated in your classes, school assemblies, or school-sponsored activities. You also have a right to observe your religious practices and pray in school, and you have a responsibility to do so in ways that do not violate the rights of others or disrupt school activities. In addition, student-led religious clubs or prayer groups have the same rights and responsibilities as other student-led organizations.

City Schools is committed to recognizing and accommodating members of all faiths with a variety of traditions, observances, practices, and religious holidays. Schools are expected to take into consideration the Maryland State Department of Education's list of observed religious holidays when they schedule tests and examinations, evening events and field trips, or extracurriculars, athletics, and community events. You may be granted up to three excused consecutive absences in observance of a religious holiday. For more information, you can review City Schools' [2025-26 School Year Calendar](#).

Supporting LGBTQ+ students

You have a right to participate in your school environment and use your chosen name and pronouns that reflect your gender identity and gender expression. LGBTQ+ students are encouraged to collaborate with the principal, along with other staff, to develop a [student-led plan](#) that provides supports, protects against bullying and harassment, and works towards inclusion of the student's family, taking into consideration safety concerns, as well as student privacy. You have a responsibility not to bully or harass other students or staff based on their gender, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation.

Students with specialized learning needs

Every student does not learn the same, and many students have special learning needs that must be met or accommodated. This includes students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and gifted and advanced learners. It is your right to receive an appropriate education that supports your learning needs. You have

a right to let your teachers know when your special learning needs are not being met. If you feel like you need more support than you are getting, you can go to a trusted adult at the school to talk about how you can get the help you need. This could be a teacher, advisor, principal, assistant principal, counselor, social worker, or another adult you trust. It is your right to work with the staff to determine how to make the most of the support being offered. Please know that it is a good thing to ask for help.

Homeless students and students in state-supervised care

If you are a homeless student, you have a right to equal access to the same educational programs and school activities that all students have. City Schools can provide support to eligible [homeless students](#), such as free transportation to and from school, school supplies, and uniforms. To learn about available resources or to request assistance, please contact the homeless liaison at your current school, your original school, or the closest school to you. The homeless liaison is often your school social worker, but if you are not sure, ask your principal who that person is. In addition, City Schools works to eliminate barriers and support educational stability for students in foster care and other [state-supervised care](#).

Student privacy

Your privacy will be respected by school staff. The school system and each school hold a variety of information and data on students to carry out their work. It is your right to ask for copies of your student records. City Schools and your school will not share your personal information with others, without approval from your parent, except in very limited circumstances as provided by law. It is also your responsibility to protect your personal information and respect the privacy of others.

Please note that you generally do not have a right or reasonable expectation of privacy when you are recorded or photographed by City Schools security cameras. These cameras are typically located in hallways, cafeterias, gymnasiums, auditoriums, and exterior school grounds, as well as school buses. Classrooms are not considered public spaces, and City School does not have video cameras in classrooms. You may be disciplined based on evidence of misconduct gathered through audio or video surveillance.

In addition, Maryland requires School Police to use body-worn cameras. These cameras will be turned on when School Police are responding to an imminent threat of serious harm to students, staff, or others. Under School Police General Orders, cameras may be turned off in some situations when they interfere with students' privacy or dignity, so please discuss any concerns with the School Police officer or school staff.

Intellectual property

You are the owner of the art projects and other schoolwork that you create in City Schools. City Schools may not claim ownership rights, property rights, or the copyright to your work. Additionally, your parents may choose to disallow the use of your intellectual property in any City Schools or external media publications, reproductions, or displays. Equally important, you have the responsibility to respect the intellectual property rights of others.

You can learn more about the rights and responsibilities in this section of the handbook in Board Policies [ACH](#) (Nursing Parents), [ADA](#) (Equity), [ECAE](#) (School Police), [EEA](#) (Student Transportation Services), [EGAD](#) (Intellectual Property), [IHBB](#) (Gifted and Advanced Learning), [JBA](#) (Nondiscrimination – Students), [JBB](#) (Sex-Based Discrimination – Students), [JFE](#) (Homeless Students), [JRA](#) (Maintenance and Release of Student Records), [JFBB](#) (Students in State-Supervised Care), and [LCA](#) (Conducting Research and Surveys, and Data Sharing), [School Police General Orders](#), and the accompanying administration regulations. There is more information on these topics on the City Schools website at these links: [special education](#), [student fair practices](#), [gifted and advanced learning](#), [homeless services](#), [students in state-supervised care](#) and [student privacy opt-out](#), and [Multilingual Learners](#).



V. **Safe, secure, and orderly learning environment**

Secure, well-maintained school buildings, classrooms, and grounds

The safety and well-being of students, staff, and entire school communities is City Schools' highest priority. You have a right to go to school in a welcoming, clean, and safe building, including hallways, bathrooms, common areas, and outside spaces. You also have a responsibility to help keep your school clean and safe. You should make sure your language and behavior support everyone in feeling safe. You should also help to keep your school clean by putting materials back where you found them, not littering, picking up trash, cleaning up after yourself if you make a mess, and holding your classmates responsible for doing the same.

Peaceful conflict resolution and other restorative practices

We all have our own beliefs, opinions, and experiences, as well as things we like or do not like, and sometimes our differences with other people lead to conflict. That is just a normal part of life. What matters is how we deal with conflict. Using physical violence to address issues with other students or adults in your school is not acceptable and will lead to consequences defined by City Schools' [Student Code of Conduct](#) (discussed more below). When you have an issue with another student or even an adult, you are expected to seek help from a trusted adult if you do not feel comfortable arriving at a resolution on your own, in a peaceful way, such as by engaging in a conversation. Adults in your school are responsible for helping you resolve conflicts peacefully, when needed, and for modeling how this can be done. For example, City Schools staff may mediate or encourage participation in a restorative circle (if you have those options at your school).

Student Code of Conduct

To create a safe, supportive, positive, and orderly learning environment, it is important to set behavioral expectations for students. It is your right to have access to the [Student Code of Conduct](#) so that you understand what behaviors are considered violations and the various levels of disciplinary responses that match those behaviors. It is your responsibility to meet the behavioral expectations listed in the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

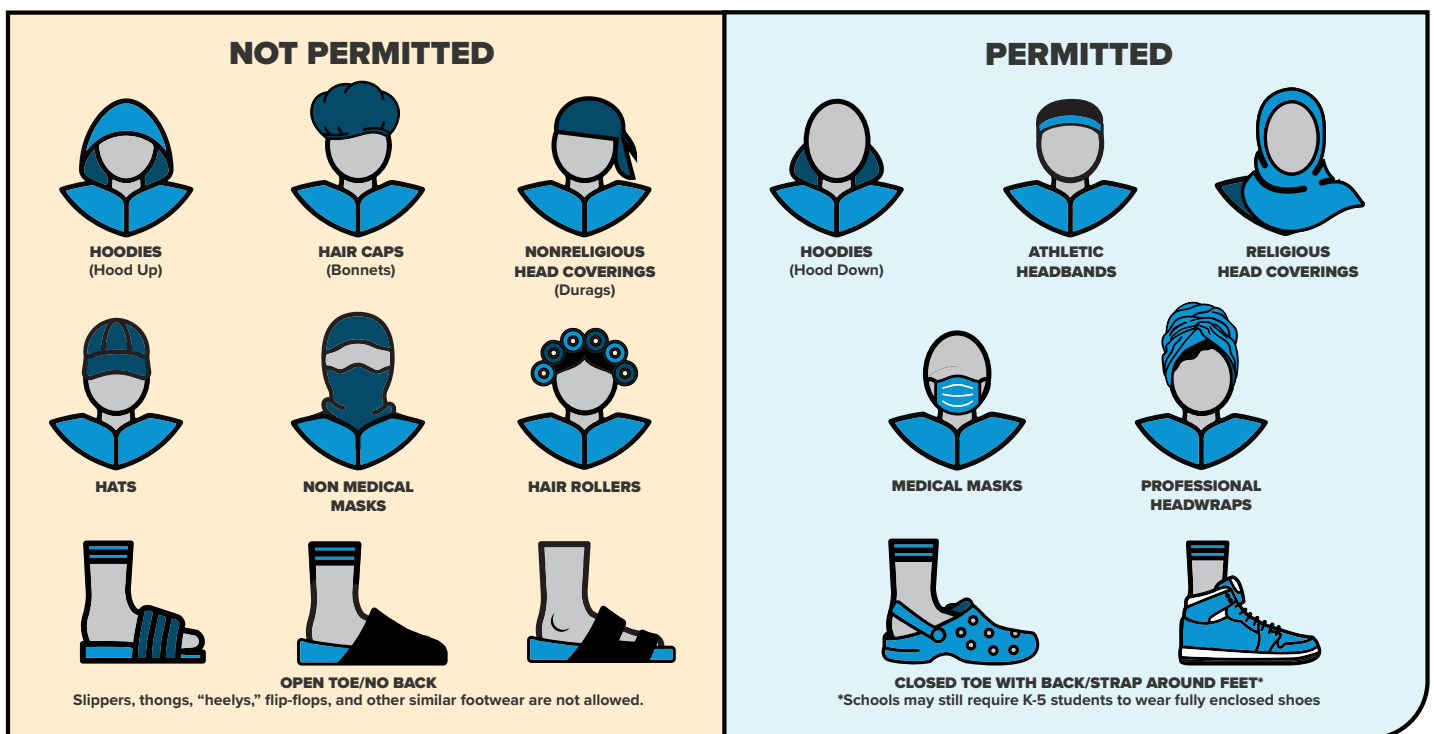
Dress Code

The [City Schools Dress Code](#) promotes a safe and positive school culture and climate for all students. You have a responsibility to follow the Dress Code and, if you attend a school that has a uniform, you have a responsibility to wear your uniform every day.

You have a right to consistent and fair enforcement of the City Schools Dress Code. That means that students should never be told that they are violating the Dress Code because of their race, religion, body type, body size, gender identity, gender expression, or stereotypes based on your personal characteristics. You also have a right to wear your hair in any style you choose.

Students cannot be suspended, “sent home,” or excluded from school for a dress code violation. City Schools supports schools using other consequences aligned to the [Student Code of Conduct](#) to enforce dress code violations. School staff should use student-positive, body-positive language and should not touch students when correcting dress code issues. School Police should not be enforcing the dress code.

The following requirements apply to all students at all schools across City Schools.



Personal property/administrative search and seizure

You have the right not to have your personal belongings searched, unless the school has a reasonable belief, at the start of the search, that you have drugs, weapons, or other items in violation of City Schools rules or law. School lockers are school property, so they can be searched at any time. It is your responsibility to only bring personal items to school that help you learn and nothing that will disrupt learning for you or others. You should never bring weapons to school.

City Schools does not allow blanket searches of all students or their personal property. However, as a safety precaution in high schools, City Schools lawfully requires students to go through metal detectors (or other weapons detection systems) when entering school buildings. If the metal detector alerts, City

Schools staff have a reasonable belief to conduct an administrative search of the student and their property, including their bookbag or other bags. Any administrative search must be conducted only with proper authority and justification, with due recognition and deference for human dignity, and following the U.S. Constitution, all other laws, and City Schools' core principles of equity.

Respectful engagement

Respect means to accept others for who they are, even if they are different from you or you do not agree with them. You have the right for your peers and other adults in school to speak to you and to treat you with respect. It is also your responsibility to speak to and treat your peers and adults at school with respect.

Bullying, harassment & intimidation

Bullying, harassment, and intimidation are intentional, unwanted, demeaning behaviors where one person uses their power to harm another person. Mean and harmful behaviors count as bullying if they are repeated (or highly likely to be repeated) over time and create a hostile educational environment. They also must be either discriminatory, sexual in nature, or threatening or seriously intimidating. Finally, the behavior must either occur on school property or during a school activity, or, if it occurs off campus or online, it must substantially disrupt orderly school operations. Bullying can include things like name-calling, making fun of someone, intentionally making someone feel uncomfortable or vulnerable, spreading lies or rumors about someone, sexual harassment, physically hurting others, threatening someone, or other actions intended to harm someone.

You have the right to attend school daily and not experience any form of bullying or harassment. This includes the right to be safe from online or cyber bullying and harassment by other students. It is also your responsibility not to bully or harass others, either in-person or online through social media.

Whether bullying takes place in person or online, it will not be tolerated at City Schools. If you or your family is concerned about bullying, you should speak with a teacher, counselor, principal, school police officer, or other member of the staff. [You can also submit a bullying or harassment complaint online.](#)

Reporting concerns without fear of retaliation

City Schools will investigate reports of misconduct, and if necessary, School Police and other law enforcement agencies will follow-up on reports or crimes, such as gang activity or illegal group behavior. You have the right to report concerns about your safety or the safety of others without worrying that it will be made public to others or that you will be targeted because of it. You also have the right to be able to report your concerns anonymously, if you choose to do so. If you know someone who reported their concerns, it is your responsibility to not share with others who that person is or what they reported. It is also your responsibility to not target others if you learn someone reported their safety concerns. These protections apply to students who submit witness statements as well.

You can learn more about the rights and responsibilities in this section of the handbook in Board Policies [ADA](#) (Equity), [ECAE](#) (School Police), [JICK](#) (Bullying, Harassment, & Intimidation), [JICF](#) (Safe Schools Act 2010: Destructive or Illegal Group Behavior), [JIH](#) (School Administrative Search & Seizures), and [JKA](#) (Behavioral Interventions and Student Discipline), as well as the accompanying administrative regulations. There is more information on these topics on the City Schools website at these links: [School Safety & Security](#), [Restorative Practices](#), [Bullying](#), [Student Code of Conduct](#), [School Police](#).



VI. Responsible use of technology

Cell phones and other portable electronic communications devices

The School Board has recently updated City Schools rules for cell phones and other portable electronic communication devices, such as personal laptops, tablets, wireless headphones or earbuds, and smart watches. Learn more here www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/cell-phone-policy.

You have the right to bring a portable personal device, such as a cell phone, with you to school. You have the responsibility to follow all City Schools rules that require devices to be off, away, and secured during the school day (from arrival to dismissal, including recess, lunch, and passing periods). Your school will explain to you and your family how devices will be secured. It is also your responsibility to learn about the consequences of possessing or using your device inappropriately. These consequences are explained in the [Student Code of Conduct](#). City Schools assumes no responsibility or liability for the loss, theft, or damage of your personal device or for the unauthorized use of your device.

In the event of a school-wide emergency, you can access your devices with permission by a school administrator or Central Office staff member. If you have a personal emergency, you may use a school phone or your device to contact a parent or guardian, with permission from a school administrator. If your parents need to contact you, they should call your school. Students with special needs requiring device access will be accommodated.

School-issued technology

School-issued technology—such as a Chromebook and educational technology platforms—may be

necessary to complete certain assignments and to keep up with schoolwork if you are away from school. It is your right to be provided with a device that lets you access your work virtually if your school moves to virtual instruction. If you are having issues with your device, you have the right to get help from your school or City Schools central office.

You have the responsibility to know and follow all City Schools and school rules about using and taking care of any technology you receive from your school. You should only use your school laptop for school-related work, and you should treat your device with care and respect.

City Schools also provides you access to online academic supports, and the Internet offers many other resources that can enhance your school experience. You have the right to use educational technology resources in ways that are positive and support your peers, your school, and your learning. It is the shared responsibility of school staff and the parent of each student to educate students about appropriate behavior and to establish expectations when using technology. In school, your online activities may be monitored by staff through systemwide technology protection measures, including filtering devices. Students must protect information and resources against theft, malicious damage, unauthorized access, tampering and loss, and comply with all laws.

Social media

If you have social media accounts, it is your responsibility to do your part to make social media a safe space for yourself and your peers. You should never use social media in ways that are hostile, disruptive, or unsafe. If your social media use disrupts the school environment, it will lead to consequences defined by City Schools' Student [Code of Conduct](#).

You also have the right not to be bullied, harassed, or intimidated online. If you do experience cyberbullying or harassment, you have the right to report it without fear of retaliation. You should also keep track of how you use social media and avoid platforms that are not age appropriate.

You can learn more about the rights and responsibilities in this section of the handbook in Board Policies [EGD](#) (Internet Safety/Acceptable Use of Technology Policy) and [JICJ](#) (Student Use of Portable Electronic Communication Devices), as well as the accompanying administrative regulations. There is more information on these topics on the City Schools website at these links: [cell phone and electronic device policy](#) and [information technology](#).



Notice of nondiscrimination

Baltimore City Public Schools (“City Schools”) does not discriminate in employment, educational programs, or activities based on actual or perceived personal characteristics, including race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, national origin, nationality, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, pregnancy or parenting status, family structure, ability (cognitive, social/emotional, and physical), veteran status, genetic information, age, immigration or citizenship status, socioeconomic status, language, or any other legally or constitutionally protected attributes or affiliations. Discrimination undermines our community’s long-standing efforts to create, foster, and promote equity and inclusion for all. Some examples of discrimination include acts of hate, violence, harassment, bullying, or retaliation. For more information, see Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners Policies [JBA \(Nondiscrimination – Students\)](#), [JBB \(Sex-Based Discrimination – Students\)](#), [JICK \(Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation of Students\)](#), [ACA \(Nondiscrimination – Employees and Third Parties\)](#), [ACB \(Sexual Harassment – Employees and Third Parties\)](#), [ACD \(ADA Reasonable Accommodations\)](#), and [ADA \(Equity\)](#), and the accompanying City Schools Administrative Regulations. City Schools also provides equal access to the Boy and Girl Scouts and other designated youth groups.

For inquiries about these nondiscrimination policies, please contact:

Director of Fair Practices and Compliance; Title IX Coordinator

200 E. North Avenue, Room 208
Baltimore, MD 21202

Phone: 410-396-8542

Fax: 410-396-2955

Email: eeo-titleixcompliance@bcps.k12.md.us

OR

Coordinator – Section 504

Special Education and Student Supports

200 E. North Avenue, Room 210
Baltimore, MD 21202

Phone: 443-462-4247

Email: 504support@bcps.k12.md.us

If you believe that you have experienced discrimination in City Schools’ employment, programs, and/or activities, or if you are requesting a reasonable accommodation, please use one of these forms, as appropriate, which also include filing instructions:

- [Student Discrimination Reporting Form](#)
- [Student Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form](#)
- [Equal Employment Opportunity Complaint Form](#)
- [Reasonable Accommodations Request Form](#)

Discrimination complaints also may be filed with other agencies, such as:

- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Baltimore Field Office, City Crescent Bldg., 10 S. Howard Street, Third Floor, Baltimore, MD 21201, 1-800-669-4000, 1-800-669-6820 (TTY); or
- U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Lyndon Baines Johnson Dept. of Education Bldg., 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-1100, 1-800-421-3481, 1-800-877-8339 (TDD), OCR@ed.gov, or www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html

This notice of nondiscrimination is available, upon request, in languages other than English and in an alternate format under the Americans with Disabilities Act, by contacting the City Schools Communications Department, 200 E. North Avenue, Room 317, Baltimore, MD 21202, communications@bcps.k12.md.us, 410-545-1870.

Any updates to this notice will be published on www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/notice-of-nondiscrimination.



Sonja Brookins Santelises, Ed.D.
CEO, Baltimore City Public Schools

200 E. North Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21202
www.baltimorecityschools.org
443-984-2000

