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CODE OF CONDUCT

2024-2025

Table of Contents

3	<u>School District of Philadelphia Office Directory</u>
4	<u>Introduction to the Code of Conduct</u>
5	<u>Community Member Responsibilities</u>
6	<u>Student Attendance</u>
9	<u>Dress Code</u>
9	<u>Virtual Instruction and Electronic Devices</u>
10	<u>Student and Guardian Rights and Supports</u>
14	<u>Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Title IX</u>
15	<u>Investigations</u>
15	<u>Student Behavior and Discipline</u>
21	<u>Philadelphia Police Department Referrals and Diversion</u>
23	<u>Appendix - Behavior Matrix</u>

School District of Philadelphia Directory

School District of Philadelphia Office Directory	
Constance E. Clayton Education Center 440 North Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19130 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM No Appointment Required	215-400-4000 English/Spanish Speakers 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM Additional Language Hotlines: philasd.org/face/contact ASK@philasd.org
Academic Services Division	215-400-4200
Family and Community Engagement	215-400-4180
School Climate and Culture	215-400-4870
Re-Engagement Center	215-400-6700
Special Education and Diverse Learners	215-400-4170
Student Enrollment and Placement	215-400-4290
Student Rights and Responsibilities	215-400-4830
Transportation	215-400-4350
Prevention and Intervention	215-400-4930
Student Health Services	215-400-4920
School Safety	215-400-6000
Other important Contact Information and Resources	
Pennsylvania Safe Schools Advocate	1-877-730-6315
Bullying Hotline	215-400-SAFE (7233)
Child Abuse Hotline	1-800-932-0313
Suicide and Crisis Lifeline	Dial 988
Philadelphia Domestic Abuse Hotline	1-866-723-3014
LGBTQIA Resources	philasd.org/studentrights/#lgbt healthymindsphilly.org
Violence Reduction & Victim Resources	cap4kids.org
Mental Health, Trauma & Self Care Resources	philasd.org/prevention
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	philasd.org/dei/



Introduction to the Code of Conduct

The School District of Philadelphia is committed to creating and maintaining safe and supportive school environments, conducive to teaching and learning. The District strives to develop meaningful partnerships with parents/guardians and all stakeholders, so that we can work together to encourage academic, social and emotional growth in all students. The District's goal is to ensure that all students have the necessary resources to graduate and succeed as fully engaged citizens of the world.

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to:

1. Outline clear expectations for all school community members
2. Provide information around student and parent/guardian rights and supports
3. Equip staff with guidelines for addressing student behavior
4. The School District of Philadelphia (The District) seeks to eliminate inequitable disciplinary practices for black and brown students and therefore the Code of Conduct encourages alternatives to exclusionary discipline.

When does the Code of Conduct apply?

The Code of Conduct applies to school community members while they are in school and/or at any school sponsored activity, such as a class trip or event. The Code of Conduct also applies to all students while they are traveling to and from school, using any mode of transportation (walking, school bus, SEPTA, etc.). Finally, the Code of Conduct applies to conduct that occurs off-grounds, virtually, and/or after-hours (including weekends), if the conduct materially impacts the school community (meaning the conduct has a noticeable or considerable impact). All individual schools must follow the District's Code of Conduct.

Community Member Responsibilities

Each school community member plays an important role in creating safe and supportive learning environments for our students. These responsibilities include:

Responsibilities of Everyone

- Respect the rights of all members of the school community.
- Maintain a positive school climate by being responsible, inclusive and cooperative.
- Practice using good judgment to prevent minor incidents from becoming major problems.

Responsibilities of Students

- Seek to understand and comply with District, school level and classroom expectations.
- Take personal responsibility to reflect on behavior and admit mistakes.
- Hold yourself accountable to strive for growth and success.
- Find motivation and joy in learning in order to focus on academic success.
- Report any conflicts and/or concerns to a school staff member.
- Ask for help and support whenever needed.

Responsibilities of School Staff Members

- Create and maintain a welcoming environment for all students, parents/guardians and visitors.
- Explicitly teach and reteach expectations for the school community.
- Model appropriate behavior and social-emotional skills for students.
- Partner with parents/guardians by proactively communicating with them and responding to meeting requests within two (2) business days.
- Ensure that all students are afforded equitable access to all opportunities at school and are not subject to harassment or disproportionate exclusion, consistent with the District's commitment to dismantle systemic racism that hinders student achievement.
- Cultivate and maintain a learning environment that leads to academic success.
- Thoroughly investigate and document alleged Code of Conduct violations in District student information systems.
- Respond to Code of Conduct violations with interventions and support to address student behavior.
- Report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the Child Abuse Hotline.
- Maintain confidentiality of student records.

Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

- Support the policies of the District, Code of Conduct and school handbook.
- Make school attendance a priority and emphasize the importance of showing up to school every day, prepared to participate and learn.
- Be an active participant in your student's education by both communicating and responding to school outreach regarding student needs, concerns and successes.
- Collaborate with school staff and stakeholders, as needed, to ensure your student receives the appropriate support needed to succeed.
- Respect the decisions made by school leaders, even if you do not agree with them.
- Model appropriate behavior and social-emotional skills for students.
- Contribute to a safe school environment by seeking to resolve conflict peacefully.

Responsibilities of School Visitors

- Schedule visits in advance whenever possible.
- When arriving at a school, report to the main office to sign in, state the reason for the visit, present photo identification (if possible), and receive authorization from a staff member to proceed with the visit.
- Understand that school leaders cannot guarantee a meeting at the time of an unscheduled visit.
- Refrain from all abusive and profane language.
- Refrain from all physical confrontation and refrain from encouraging/inciting physical confrontation.
- Refrain from bringing weapons of any kind onto school property. Bringing weapons of any kind onto school property will result in an immediate exclusion.

Parents/Guardians who do not comply with community members responsibilities addressed above may be excluded from the school for three (3) months, or the duration of the year depending on the circumstances. Exclusions may only be made by written exclusion letter issued from the school to the parent/guardian. When possible, a written warning letter will be issued prior to the exclusion letter, notifying the parent/guardian of behavior that has not yet warranted an exclusion but may in the future if the behavior is repeated.

There are circumstances in which extremely disruptive or violent behavior will warrant immediate exclusion. During the exclusionary period, the excluded parent/guardian will not be able to enter school property without an appointment approved by school leadership. Schools may, at their discretion, meet with excluded parents virtually rather than permitting the parent onto school grounds by appointment. The full exclusion letter protocol can be found on the [Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) website.

Student Attendance

Research shows that attendance is a critical factor in student achievement. Students who attend school on time, every day are more likely to:

- perform on or above grade level in reading *and* math,
- build relationships that support their social and emotional well-being,
- and successfully graduate high school on time.

Compulsory School Attendance

Under Pennsylvania law, all students between the ages of six (6) and eighteen (18) must attend school every day. Once a student is enrolled in school, this includes five (5) year old students in kindergarten, they are subject to compulsory school attendance laws until the student reaches age eighteen (18). A parent/guardian who enrolls their student in kindergarten may formally withdraw their student from school prior to reaching compulsory school age (six) at which point the student would no longer be subject to compulsory school laws until they turn six (6) years old.

Attendance shall be required of all students during the days and hours that school is in session, except that authorized District staff may excuse a student for temporary absences in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, Board policy, and Guidelines for Attendance and Truancy.

A student shall be considered in attendance if present at any place where school is in session by authority of the Board; if receiving approved tutorial instruction or health or therapeutic services; if engaged in an approved and properly supervised independent study, work-study, or career education program; if receiving approved homebound instruction; or if the student's placement is instruction in the home.

Parents/Guardians are expected to:

- Ensure that student(s) between the ages of six (6) and eighteen (18) are enrolled in school and attend school regularly, on time, and for the entire school day.
- Provide the school with current contact information (address, phone, email) at the beginning of each school year and update the information with the school whenever there are changes.
- Schedule appointments and family vacations outside of school hours whenever possible.
- Ensure that students receive the necessary student health examinations and immunizations.
- Provide a written note for every absence, late arrival and early dismissals, per policy.
- Participate in school attendance improvement conferences, to improve daily student attendance, when necessary.

Excused/Lawful Absence

An excused absence is when a student is absent from school for a reason identified by the District as legitimate, valid and reasonable. The following conditions or situations constitute reasonable cause for absence from school, as outlined in the [District's 204 Attendance Policy](#). Some of these events have their own conditions that need to be met in order for the absence to be excused.

- Obtaining professional health care or therapy service rendered by a licensed practitioner.
 - Upon written request by a parent/guardian, a student may be excused during school hours for the purpose of obtaining professional health care or therapy service only if the following requirements are met:
 - The health or therapeutic services are to be rendered by licensed practitioners.
 - It is not practical or possible for the student to receive the services outside of school hours.
 - The time of necessary absence from school involves a minimum of interference with the student's regular program of studies.
- Illness, including if a student is dismissed by designated District staff during school hours for health-related reasons
- Quarantine
- Recovery from accident
- Required court appearance
- Death in family
- Educational trip/tour if the following conditions are met:
 - The person in parental relation submits the documentation required for excusal prior to the absence, within the appropriate time frame.
 - The student's participation has been approved by the Superintendent or principal.
 - The adult directing and supervising the tour or trip is acceptable to the person in parental relation.
- College tours, trade school tours, career and technical training program tours, community college tours, or tours of other non-District schools, with prior approval.
 - The District may limit the number and duration of non-school-sponsored educational tours or trips for which excused absences may be granted to a student during the school year.
- Observance of a religious holiday observed by a bona fide religious group, upon prior written request from the person in parental relation.
- Out-of-school suspension
- Family Emergency (An unexpected, serious event that is outside of the control of the student's family)
 - Requires parental note explaining the emergency received within 3 school days of the student's return. School staff will evaluate if the situation constitutes a family emergency.

Temporary Excusals

The following students may be temporarily excused from the requirements of attendance at District schools:

- For the purpose of receiving tutorial instruction in a field not offered in the district's curricula, with certain requirements.
- Students participating in a religious instruction program, with certain conditions.
- School-age students unable to attend school upon recommendation of the school physician and a psychiatrist or school psychologist, or both, and with approval of the Secretary of Education of the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Unexcused/Unlawful Absences

An absence is considered "unlawful" or "unexcused" when either a written note from a parent/guardian, licensed healthcare provider, court, or child welfare documentation was not submitted to the school upon the student's return from the absence (in accordance to written note protocol), or the reason provided in the written note by the parent/guardian was deemed invalid by the school, and did not meet the conditions or situations outlined in the District's 204 Attendance Policy. Examples of invalid excuses include (but not limited to): babysitting, waking up late, illness of a family member, and family vacation.

Parental Notice of Absences (Written Note)

- The District's attendance policy requires written excuse notes explaining the absence.
 - Parents/Guardians should contact the school to verify ways excuse notes may be submitted.
 - Excuse notes must be given to the school within *three (3) days* upon the student's return to school. If the note is not submitted to the school within the required time frame, the day(s) may not be excused.
 - Excuse notes must include the student's name, date(s) of absence(s) and a valid telephone number or other means of contact for verification purposes.
- All absences resulting in a total of three (3) or more consecutive days due to illness will require a written excuse note by a licensed healthcare provider. *An excuse note from a licensed healthcare provider may also be submitted in lieu of a parent note for any absence.*
- For all absences and those that do not total three (3) consecutive days, parents may submit a written excuse note stating the reason for the absence.
- When a student has been absent due to illness, excused with a parent note, totaling eight (8) days (cumulative), all subsequent absences may require a written excuse note from a licensed healthcare provider.
- The submission of notes does not guarantee automatic excusal of absences and are subject to school review to determine the validity of submitted notes.

Responses to Non-Attendance and Truancy

Truancy means having three (3) or more unexcused absences during the current school year, by a student subject to compulsory school attendance. Students who have six (6) or more unexcused absences are considered habitually truant. Students who have ten (10) or more unexcused absences are considered chronically truant. For each absence recorded, parents/guardians receive notification via phone call, email, or text.

Notice of Truancy

When a student of compulsory school age has been absent for three (3) days (consecutive/non-consecutive) during the current school year without a lawful excuse, District staff shall provide notice to the parent/guardian within ten (10) school days of the student's third unexcused absence.

School Attendance Improvement Conference

If the student continues to accumulate additional unexcused absences after issuance of the notice, the parent/guardian and student will be invited to attend a School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC) where a School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) will be created in order to discuss the student's absences, identify barriers and develop meaningful strategies in an effort to improve attendance with or without additional services. The parent/guardian and student must be invited to this conference in advance. Neither the student nor the parent/guardian shall be required to participate, although it is highly recommended. The SAIC shall occur even if the parent/guardian declines to participate or fails to attend the scheduled conference.

Regional Truancy Court

If the student's attendance does not improve after implementation and progress monitoring of the SAIP, and the student has accrued ten (10) or more unexcused absences, the student may be referred and scheduled for a Truancy Court hearing, in order to prevent, address, and reduce chronic truant behavior. Families are notified of the truancy court hearing in advance from Family Court.

Family Court

If the student's attendance does not improve at the Regional Truancy Court level, the case may be referred to Family Court for more intensive services, where a judge has the authority to adjudicate the student dependent and assign the case to the Department of Human Services for more intensive services.

Non-Compulsory School-Age Students (18 years old and over)

Students who are 18 years of age and over are beyond the compulsory age for school. If a non-compulsory school age student has been absent, unexcused, for an excessive number of days, school staff may reach out to the family to offer support and notify them of the possibility that the student may be withdrawn from roll for non-attendance.

For more information on attendance, including resources, visit philasd.org/attendtoday.

Dress Code

Students have the right to dress in a manner that celebrates their racial, cultural, religious, and gender identities, is reflective of their gender expression (including gender neutrality) and allows them to focus on their academic, social and emotional growth. Students are expected to follow their school's dress code so that their appearance does not constitute a health or safety hazard. School leaders must determine, in collaboration with their school community, what the school dress policy will be and then communicate that decision before the start of the school year.

All school dress policies must comply with the following District guidelines:

- Students have the right to wear protective hairstyles such as braids, locs, puffs, afros, twists, wigs, including styles with elements such as headbands, head wraps, bonnets, barrettes or beads. Students will not be discriminated against on the basis of their hair texture. Discrimination on the basis of protective hairstyle and/or hair texture is illegal racial discrimination.
- Students have the right to dress in accordance with their stated gender identity and/or expression (including gender neutrality) within the constraints of the school's dress code.
- Students have the right to wear religious garb in accordance with their religious practices, which cannot be restricted or banned.
- Ski-masks or other non-religious face coverings (not to include medical face masks) are NOT permitted for any reason.
- No student in the School District of Philadelphia may be excluded from the classroom environment including being denied entrance to school, suspended, or expelled for not following the dress code.

Students who do not have access to resources to adhere to the school dress code should discuss these circumstances with their school counselor. For more information regarding a school's dress code, please consult the school handbook.

Virtual Instruction and Electronic Devices

All students are expected to attend school in person unless there is an approved school closure (i.e. COVID-19, asbestos, inclement weather) or the student is approved for [homebound](#) services for urgent medical reasons. Students are otherwise not permitted to stay home from school and complete assignments virtually, via google classroom or other platform, as a means to access their education.

Families who are interested in full-time virtual instruction may apply to the School District of Philadelphia's K-12 virtual school [Philadelphia Virtual Academy \(PVA\)](#). Students still have access to in-person support through Academic Support Centers as well as extra-curricular activities. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

Acceptable Use of Internet and Technology

Technology is an ever-growing part of education and as such, students may use Chromebooks and other electronic devices/platforms provided by their teacher(s) to complete assignments. Parents/Guardians are expected to review responsible and safe usage of technology with their students as outlined in [School Board Policy 815](#). Students should be reminded to:

- Do not share passwords, location, or any personal information on the internet.
- Do not post/share information about other community members on District or personal devices.
- Do not visit websites that are harmful or inappropriate for minors.
- Do not plagiarize; always exercise academic integrity when using the internet to support assignment completion (i.e. citations).

If parents/guardians identify a security and/or safety concern with their school issued device and/or educational platform, they should notify a school leader immediately. More information on internet safety can be found on the [Office of Educational Technology](#) website.

Student Possession of Electronic Devices

District students may not use personal computing devices, including for educational purposes, while inside District buildings and should instead use their District-issued computing device. Cell phones and wearable devices may be used in accordance with school-specific protocols, as outlined in [School Board Policy 237](#).

Students should not use cell phones or wearable devices in classrooms unless permitted by a school staff member. Each school creates their own protocols that set expectations for student use of cell phones and wearable devices. Schools may create protocols that designate areas within the school and times of day where student use of cell phones or wearable devices is permitted, among other rules for student use of cell phones or wearable devices during school hours.

Electronic device protocols are designed to increase student safety, learning and engagement. If a student is unable to use their personal device, and needs to contact a parent/guardian in the case of an emergency, they should make this request to a school staff member.

For additional questions/concerns, please contact your school principal.

Student and Guardian Rights

There are a number of protections in place for students and families, as well as resources that are available to support student safety, well-being and success.

Students Experiencing Homelessness

The District adheres to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act which ensures immediate enrollment and educational stability for students experiencing homelessness. Homelessness is defined as anyone lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes students who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason (known as doubled up or couch surfing); living temporarily in motels, parks or campgrounds; living in a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a sleeping accommodation by human beings; living in cars, abandoned buildings or substandard housing or similar situations; and refugee or migrant if they are living in circumstances like those described above.

Unaccompanied youth also fall under this category and can be described as a youth not in the physical custody of a legal parent or guardian and youth living on their own in any of the homeless situations described above. Students in the care of a children and youth agency (foster care system) are NOT included unless they are also displaced. Students who meet the criteria of homelessness, even if unaccompanied by a guardian, must be given full and equal access to an appropriate public education and success in the educational program. The permanency and adequacy of the housing conditions will be considered when determining if a student qualifies.

These students may enroll in:

- The school the student attended when permanently housed (school of origin).
- Any school that students who live in the catchment area in which the student experiencing homelessness is actually living are eligible to attend (new neighborhood school).

An unaccompanied youth with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) may also need to have a surrogate parent appointed by the District within 30 days if the student has no one to serve in this role.

For more information, contact [Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness \(ECYEH\)](#) in the following ways: Phone: 215-400-4830 (option 4); Email: ecyeh@philasd.org; [ECYEH Referral Online Form](#).

Students in Foster Care

The District adheres to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to support students in Foster Care. Students in foster care remain in their school of origin (the school where the student was enrolled at the time of placement), unless a determination is made that it is not in their best interest to attend that school. If a student has recently entered foster care or experienced a change in placement, a Best Interest Determination (BID) meeting will be held to determine if the student should remain in the school of origin or if they should transition to a new school. Foster parents and/or foster care workers should not make any changes to enrollment for students who are in foster care without a BID meeting being held first.

For more information, contact Foster Care Services in the following ways: Phone: 215-400-4830 or Email: fostercareservices@philasd.org.

Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students

Transgender and gender non-conforming students are afforded certain rights and protections under [School Board Policy 252](#), including:

- The right to privacy, and this includes the right to keep one's transgender identity private at school.
- While students have a right to be "out" if they choose, school staff should not disclose information that may reveal a student's transgender identity or gender nonconformity to others, including parents and other school staff, unless the student has authorized such disclosure.
- Students have the right to be referred to by their chosen name and pronouns. The District recognizes that faculty, staff, and other students who repeatedly and callously refuse to honor a student's chosen name and pronouns, is considered discriminatory and that such behavior fosters a harmful, hostile environment.
- The right to be included in the group that corresponds to their gender identity; this includes athletic teams and related programming.
- The right to have access to the restroom or locker room that corresponds to their gender identity.

Further, the District commits to fostering safe and affirming school environments for all students, but particularly an environment where LGBTQ+ students can be themselves while accessing school in the same manner as other students. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities further commits to addressing matters of sex, sexuality, and gender-based discrimination and/or complaints related to bullying and harassment of LGBTQ+ students as outlined below (page 13).

Requests for Name and/or Gender Change can be made by completing an [electronic form](#). This form can be completed by the student or a staff member on their behalf. For questions regarding the School Board Policy 252, please contact the District by email: policy252@philasd.org.

Religious Practices

Parent/Guardians may request for a student to be excused for the following religious practices:

- Religious Holidays: Students may be excused from school for religious holidays observed by recognized religious groups.
- Religious Instruction: By request, students may be excused from school to attend classes for religious instruction.
 - The request shall identify and describe the instruction, and the dates and hours for which the absence is requested.
 - The excusal must be limited to a total of 36 hours per school year.
 - Following each absence, the parent/guardian must provide a statement attesting that the student did in fact attend the instruction and the dates and hours upon which such attendance took place.
- Prayer During School Hours: Students may be permitted to engage in a recognized religion's prayer during school hours in the school building, however, prayer should not be held during instructional time in order to minimize any academic interruption.

Request for Special Education Evaluation

Any student with a suspected disability must be evaluated to determine the student's eligibility to receive an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). School leaders or parents/guardians may initiate the process. Parents/Guardians should request an evaluation in writing, but requests will be accepted verbally. Once the request is made, the school must respond within ten (10) calendar days. The school will either issue a "Permission to Evaluate" (PTE) or a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP) to explain, in writing, why the evaluation request is being denied. If a PTE is issued, the school must make three (3) attempts to receive signed consent. If signed consent is not received, then the school cannot proceed with the evaluation. For questions, please visit the [Office of Diverse Learners](#) website or contact the school's Special Education Compliance Monitor (SPECM).

Request for 504 Service Plan

A student who does not qualify for special education services under IDEA may qualify for a 504 plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, a civil rights law that protects students from discrimination based on disability. To be found eligible for a 504 plan, a student must have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits their educational performance. Parents/Guardians may request a 504 plan by contacting the school counselor or other school leader. The request should be made in writing and include any relevant medical records along with recommendations for specific services or accommodations the student may need. For questions regarding the 504 process, please contact the Office of Prevention and Intervention using the [504 Inquiry Form](#) or email 504information@philasd.org.

Expunging Records for Expelled Students

A student who has been permanently or temporarily expelled by the affirmative vote of a majority of the School Board, may apply to have the records of expulsion expunged under [School Board Policy 233](#). Expunging records occurs at the discretion of the superintendent or designee and is not subject to review or appeal to the school board or courts.

Parents/Guardians and Authorized Visitors

[School Board Policy 904](#) states that a disabled parent/guardian or authorized visitor who requires a reasonable accommodation to assist in their attendance/participation at a school event should contact the event administrative organizer. This must occur at least three (3) business days in advance of the scheduled event or three (3) days following receipt of notice of the event, whichever accomplishes the earliest notice to the District. Requests should be made as early as possible because some accommodations require additional time to prepare/arrange.

Language Access

Parents/Guardians have the right to communications and information from the District and the student's school in their preferred language. If parents/guardians speak and/or write a language other than English, an interpreter must be provided for calls and meetings with school staff, and written communications from the school must be translated into their preferred language. Teachers and school staff should use multiple resources to provide language access, such as Language Line, bilingual counseling assistants, and [translation request forms](#) to engage with the District's English Learners and multilingual parents/guardians. Schools must record a parent/guardian's preferred language and provide them with information about their rights to language services and how to access resources in their preferred languages. Families can learn more about the District's multilingual support, submit a language access complaint and/or provide feedback via google form on the [Family and Community Engagement](#) website.

Parent/Guardian Appeals

The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities is responsible for reviewing decisions made by school and/or central office staff to determine if the decision was made in accordance with District policies, procedures, and protocols.

The following decisions can be appealed within 15 days of receipt of the decision:

- **Disciplinary Hearing Decisions**
 - Decisions made pursuant to a disciplinary hearing (see Student Discipline section)
 - If a student received a lateral transfer or Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth (AEDY) assignment, the assignment remains in effect during the appeal period.
- **Safety Interim Placements**
 - Decisions made pursuant to an AEDY interim placement (see Student Discipline section)
 - The interim assignment remains in effect during the appeal period.
- **Homelessness Designation**
 - Decisions made pursuant to eligibility under Title X, Part C of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
 - Students involved in a McKinney-Vento dispute process have the right to enroll immediately in the school of choice pending resolution of the dispute.
 - If there is not a resolution at the district-level, the dispute will be moved to the state level for final resolution facilitated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education's (PDE) State Coordinator.
- **Exclusion Letters**
 - Decisions made that exclude parents/guardians from a school building (for a specified amount of time) as a result of behavior that violates the Code of Conduct.
 - The exclusion letter remains in effect during the appeal review period.

- **Bullying/Harassment Findings**
 - Decisions made on findings of an investigation into allegations of bullying, harassment and/or discrimination.
 - Decisions made related to a Title IX Harassment Formal Complaint, including, dismissal of a Title IX Formal Complaint and the Determination for a Title IX Formal Complaint.
- **School Selection**
 - Decisions made pursuant to school selection eligibility can be appealed annually during the school selection appeal window. Information on the school selection appeals process will be provided during the school selection application process on the [Office of Student Enrollment and Placement](#) website.

More information on the appeals process, including the appeals form, can be found on the [Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) website. Parents/Guardians can email appealsoffice@philasd.org or contact 215-400-4830 for questions and/or to request the appeal form. All emails will be responded to within 24 hours.

Student and Guardian Supports

In addition to student and parent/guardian rights and protections, there are additional resources and offices available to support well-being and educational access.

Family and Community Engagement

The [Office of Family and Community Engagement \(FACE\)](#) offers a wide array of programs and services to support the meaningful district-wide engagement of families and community stakeholders with the District. These supports include:

- **Family Engagement Liaisons:** Each school has an assigned family engagement liaison to provide schools with best practice family engagement strategies. Liaisons work directly with families to assist with navigating the District, address concerns, and offer parental learning opportunities and community resources through school-level workshops. To contact your school's liaison or reach school staff that can help with your specific need, visit the [GET Help web-page](#).
- **Family Workshops:** The District offers FREE workshops for families and other members of the District community.
- **Volunteer Support:** Learn more about how the District's Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) supports volunteers at philasd.org/face/volunteer.
- **Question or Concern Resolution:** The FACE office administers the District's constituent concern process. It is recommended that parents and families reach out to their student's teachers and school leaders first to try and work together to resolve any questions or concerns about their student or school. If the question or concern remains unresolved, FACE staff can assist with the [constituent concern](#) process to help find a solution in the best interest of the student.
- **Contact the District:** FACE office staff answer calls, respond to emails and provide in-person services to individuals who need support directly from the District. See contact information in the office directory.

Prevention and Intervention

The [Office of Prevention and Intervention](#) provides various supports to students in order to address barriers to their education. These supports include:

- **School Counseling:** School counselors work with caregivers, school staff, and community partners to ensure that student needs are being met. Counselors advocate for students' well-being and provide valuable resources for their educational and personal advancement, helping to remove any barriers a student may be experiencing. Counselors provide services under three (3) domains: academic, social-emotional and college/career readiness.
- **Intensive Behavioral Health Services (IBHS):** Each school has an IBHS provider to address the needs of youth providing age appropriate, trauma-informed, therapeutic interventions to address behavioral health needs by providing behavioral health supports in the school, home, and community.
- **Support Team for Educational Partnership (STEP):** The STEP program includes a mental health team that supports schools by [addressing mental health and complex needs for students and families in the school setting](#).
- **Prevention & Intervention (P&I) Liaisons:** P&I Liaisons are a team of Clinicians who support school counselors and school leaders with addressing the behavioral health needs of students. They provide clinical consultation for Behavioral Health Emergencies and coordinate Critical Incident Responses at schools.

Victim Services

If a student is a victim of a school related incident, the school should create and institute a safety plan for that student, if appropriate. Parents/Guardians should be a part of the planning process and contribute to its final version. Parents/Guardians must sign and receive a copy of the plan once completed.

Additional victim services can be sought through the Pennsylvania Office of Safe Schools Advocate. The Safe Schools Advocate can be reached in person at 440 N. Broad Street (Suite 1198), by phone: 1-877-730-6315 and 215-656-5381 or by email: RA-OSSAPhiladelphia@pa.gov. Families can also contact the District's Office of School Safety's Victim Assistance Specialist by phone: 215-400-6758.

Student Transition Center

The Student Transition Center (STC) serves as a centralized welcome center located at 440 N. Broad Street, for students transitioning back to the District from one of five (5) pathways and are in need of a school assignment after (thirty) 30+ days. Students will receive a transition meeting and case management services.

Pathways to the STC include:

- **Residential Treatment Facility (RTF):** Students court-ordered or referred by the Department of Human Services, Philadelphia Juvenile Probation, or Community Behavioral Health (CBH).
- **Congregate Care:** Dependent or delinquent students transitioning from a court-ordered congregate care placement or detention center.
- **Long-term Hospitalizations:** Students discharged from to a mental/behavioral health in-patient and/or partial hospitalization
- **Resource Home or Shelter:** Students returning from a out-of-district placement and placed in a foster home or shelter.
- **AEDY Referrals:** Students returning to a SDP school after completing an Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth (AEDY) program.

The Re-Engagement Center

The Re-Engagement Center (REC) is a "one-stop" shop that provides counseling, school referral services, and information leading to re-enrollment in a high school diploma or GED program. REC connects students who have dropped out and those in danger of dropping out, with several program types, giving students a variety of options for completing their graduation requirements. To contact the REC, please visit the [REC website](#) and click "get started" to complete an intake form.

Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Title IX

The District recognizes the negative impact that bullying, harassment and/or discrimination has on student health, welfare, and safety and on the learning environment. All such conduct is prohibited by law and [Board Policies](#), for example, Policy 248, Policy 249, and Policy 252.

Title IX

Title IX is a federal law that prohibits discrimination based on sex, which encompasses sexual assault and other forms of sexual violence; treatment of pregnant and parenting students; and treatment of LGBTQI+ students.

If there are concerns or questions related to Title IX, please contact:

Inquiries related to students:

Andrea Prince, Compliance Officer/Title IX Coordinator
antiharassment@philasd.org
440 N. Broad Street, Phila, PA 19130



Inquiries related to employees:

Michelle Chapman, Title IX Co-Coordinator
employeerelations@philasd.org
400 N. Broad Street, Phila, PA 19130

Reporting

Any school community member can report bullying, harassment and/or discrimination and all reports will be investigated regardless of how the complaint was received.

There are numerous ways to make a report:

- Completing the [online Bullying Harassment and Discrimination reporting form](#)
- Calling the Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination hotline at 215-400-SAFE.
- Submitting a complaint via [Safe2Say](#) or by phone at 1-844-SAF2SAY (723-2729)
- Emailing the Compliance Officer/Title IX Coordinator directly at antiharassment@philasd.org
- Reporting the incident to the building principal or designee, or to any other member of the school staff, including teachers, guidance counselors, bilingual counseling assistants (BCAs), coaches, and school leaders.

*If a Parent/Guardian or student submitted a complaint and has not received a determination after 7 school days, please email antiharassment@philasd.org.

Investigations

The District takes all violations of the Code of Conduct seriously. A principal or designee must conduct investigations into any alleged Code of Conduct violation. This includes conduct that occurs off - grounds, virtually, and/or after-hours (including weekends), if the conduct materially impacts the school community (meaning the conduct has a noticeable or considerable impact).

The following guidelines apply to conducting investigations:

- Parents/Guardians must be notified of all serious incidents involving their students, however, schools do not need parent/guardian permission to conduct an investigation or obtain statements related to alleged misconduct.
- In accordance with [Board Policy 226](#), school administrators may “search” a student and/or their belongings if there is reasonable suspicion that the student has prohibited items.
- If the conduct includes a threat to use a weapon, kill or inflict serious bodily injury with intent/plan, the school must follow the District Threat Assessment process by contacting the Office of School Safety.
- If the complaint includes allegations of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or harassment based on sexual orientation, notify the Title IX Coordinator before proceeding with an investigation or discipline.
- Some alleged conduct may require a notification to the Philadelphia Police Department; schools are to consult with their School Safety Officer and/or Area Manager for guidance.
- Some alleged conduct may require a notification to Childline as District employees are mandated reporters.
- At times, it may be necessary to share some information about a serious incident with the school community (parents/guardians and students). Schools should conference with the Assistant Superintendent who will reach out to the Office of Communications when considering if a letter/communication will be sent.
- In some cases, Investigators from Central Office will lead or be involved in an investigation.
- Schools should refer to the [Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) investigation stepper for a complete guide on conducting an investigation.

Student Behavior and Discipline

School environments that are positive, equitable, and that support students in building social-emotional skills and strong relationships can result in: decreased behavioral disruptions; increased student engagement; improved academic outcomes; and more positive interpersonal interactions between and among staff and students. In the District, all schools implement evidence-based [school-wide climate approaches](#): Relationships First (RF), Culturally Responsive Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (CR-PBIS), and School-wide Social Emotional Learning (SEL).

When disruptive behavior does occur, schools must respond by referring to the **Behavior Matrix** (see Appendix) and make decisions in accordance with the District's approach to discipline:

- Behavioral incidents should be treated as opportunities for learning and growth.
- Except in cases of the most serious infractions, every incident should be addressed through restorative approaches.
- Restorative approaches are focused on teaching and healing, rather than punishment.
- Schools should utilize school-based approaches before resorting to excluding a student. In cases where exclusion is appropriate, additional interventions must also be put in place.

For more information on the District's approach to student discipline, please visit the [Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) website.

For more information on behavioral health supports and interventions, visit the [Office of Prevention & Intervention](#) website.

SCHOOL BASED BEHAVIOR RESPONSES	
Logical Consequences	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Emotional Learning • Restorative Conversation • Phone Call Home • Seat Change • Loss of Privilege • Apology/Reflection • Restoration Room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Conference • Community Service/Project • Harm and Healing Circle • Peer Mediation • Circle of Support & Accountability (COSA) • Youth Court • Detention and Reflection
Targeted Supports	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring • Behavior Contract • Check-in/Check-out • Daily Report • Referral to Counselor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Group Interventions • Student Assistance Program (SAP) Referral • Support Team for Educational Partnership (STEP) Referral (If applicable)
Intensive Supports	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety Plan • Intensive Prevention Services (IPS) Referral • Intensive Behavioral Health Services (IBHS) Referral • 504 Plan Referral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Evaluation • Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and Positive Support and Behavior Plan (PBSP) • Crisis Referral (Behavioral Health Emergency)

In addition to school-based behavior responses, schools may determine that exclusionary discipline is warranted for safety reasons. With regard to exclusionary discipline, research shows that Black youth are three (3) times more likely to be expelled than their white peers and students with disabilities are two (2) times more likely to receive out-of-school suspensions. The District does not support the use of zero tolerance policies that require school staff to suspend or expel students for certain behaviors except if required by law. The District is committed to improving educational equity and reducing racial disproportionality in punitive and exclusionary discipline, which includes removing students from their school.

Suspension Procedures

According to Pennsylvania law, suspension is defined as the denial to a student of the right to attend school and to take part in any school function for any period of up to ten (10) consecutive school days. All suspensions must be preceded by notification to the student and parent/guardian in writing in accordance with state law.

In-School Suspensions

In-school suspension (ISS) is an exclusion from the classroom and allows a student to remain under the direct supervision of school staff. Direct supervision means school staff are physically in the same location as students under their supervision. Students participating in in-school suspension will have the opportunity to complete assignments as well as a reflection related to their behavior that prompted the ISS. All schools may not have the staffing to facilitate ISS and therefore this may not always be a disciplinary option.

Out-of-School Suspensions

Kindergarten, first and second grade may NOT be suspended unless their actions result in documented serious bodily injury. Schools must consult with the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities before issuing a suspension for students in these grades. Additionally, students must be referred to the counselor for appropriate behavioral health interventions and support. Parents/Guardians are asked to partner with the school to address behaviors.

Students in grades three (3) through twelve (12) may be suspended when they have violated the Code of Conduct and a suspension is deemed appropriate for the behavior.

- **Short-term suspension:** an exclusion from school and/or any school activity or function for a period of one (1) to three (3) school days.
- **Long-term suspension:** an exclusion from school and/or any school activity or function for a period of four (4) to ten (10) school days. Schools must consult with their Assistant Superintendent and the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities before issuing a long-term suspension.

A student cannot be *excluded* from school unless there is a documented suspension. Exclusion from school includes: sending a student home, not allowing a student to return to the building (in the event that they left the building without permission), requesting a student to stay home from school for any number of days with or without virtual instruction.

The following guidelines apply to all out-of-school suspensions (OSS):

- Students must meet with the principal or designee prior to the suspension, unless it is clear that the health and safety of the school community is compromised.
- When a student is removed from school in response to an inappropriate behavior, the removal counts as the first day of an OSS.
- The parent/guardian must be notified and a suspension notice must be issued at the time of the suspension.
- Schoolwork must be proactively provided to the student if the suspension will exceed four (4) days and the assignment(s) should be completed by reinstatement.
- A suspension is an excused absence and cannot be coded as “unexcused.”
- A parent conference should be scheduled before or upon the student’s reinstatement to school. However, a parent conference cannot be required as a condition of reinstatement in school. Students must be allowed to re-enter school upon conclusion of their suspension.
- A student serving out-of-school suspension is not allowed to come onto school property, participate in extracurricular activities, or attend school-sponsored events.
- A student may be considered trespassing if they come onto school grounds while serving an OSS.

Parent/Guardian Conference Procedures

Schools must adhere to the following procedures when scheduling parent conferences to address behavior:

- Notice of a conference must be provided to the parent/guardian in writing, in their preferred language and sent by mail, email, or by other reasonable means.
- Parents/Guardians are expected to attend all scheduled conferences and school leaders should make every attempt to engage guardians so that they are able to participate in-person or virtually, as needed.
- Interpretation will be provided if requested.
- The purpose of the conference should be to discuss the behavior/incident and offer supportive services as needed.
- Parents/Guardians may request a copy of student records and any evidence related to the incident(s).
 - Statements must be redacted before they can be provided to the parent/guardian.
 - Photographs and video recordings of incidents may be shown but copies cannot be provided.
- School leaders will inform parents/guardians of any further disciplinary action and provide an overview of due process rights regarding disciplinary action.

Disciplinary Hearing Process

Disciplinary Hearings only apply to students in grades six (6) through twelve (12). Students in kindergarten through grade five (5) cannot be referred for a disciplinary hearing, and therefore may not receive a disciplinary or lateral transfer.

Students who committed serious violation(s) of the Code of Conduct may be referred to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for a student disciplinary hearing, if the behavior meets the criteria as outlined in the Behavior Matrix (see appendix). Prior to making a referral, schools must complete a Behavior Performance Review (BPR) for general education students to determine if the student is thought to have a disability. Students have the right to return to school pending the outcome of the hearing, unless they are approved for a safety interim placement and receive an assignment letter.

Safety Interim Placements

- Schools may request a safety interim placement (temporary school assignment) to an Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth (AEDY) transition program for the limited situations where the school has documented that the student's behavior poses a continued threat to the school community.
- If an interim assignment is granted by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, a hearing must be promptly scheduled.
- Students with disabilities are not able to receive safety interim placements, unless there are special circumstances. Please read the next section to learn more about discipline for students with disabilities.

Students who are referred for a disciplinary hearing receive full due process to determine whether the student should be removed from their current school placement. Disciplinary hearings are conducted by an impartial Restorative Discipline Liaison.

Students and parents/guardians participating in the disciplinary hearing process have the following rights:

- To review any evidence the school plans to present at the hearing.
- To have an interpreter in their preferred language.
- To bring their own witnesses and/or character statements to the hearing.
- To bring a representative and/or advocate to the hearing.
- To be provided with two opportunities to attend the hearing.
- To ask questions of the school and present evidence if it relates to the incident.
- To be provided with the hearing decision within 7 days of the hearing.
- To be provided a copy of the hearing recording if requested.
- To obtain a copy of their student's records if requested.

Hearing Decisions

The impartial Restorative Discipline Liaison will consider all evidence, dialogue in the hearing, and a student's academic, behavior and attendance records when making a decision on the outcome.

Outcomes can include one of the following:

- The student remains in their current school due to insufficient evidence of violating the code of conduct.
- The student remains in their current school with a behavior contract.
- The student remains in their current school without a behavior contract (i.e. sufficient consequences were already issued).
- The student is laterally transferred to another district or contract-operated school.
- The student is transferred to an AEDY transitional program.

Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth (AEDY)

- Pennsylvania's AEDY transition program provides support to students in grades 6-12 who have been removed from the regular education setting for disciplinary reasons.
 - Students must have a hearing prior to placement unless a safety interim placement is warranted due to a serious situation.
- AEDY provides a combination of intensive, individual academic instruction and behavior modification counseling in an alternative setting to assist students in returning successfully to the regular education setting.
- The District and the AEDY transition program work with families to create behavioral goals based on their reason for placement and assessments.
 - Students receive a formal periodic review (progress review) before their presumptive exit date.
 - Once behavioral goals are met, students prepare to transition to the regular education setting with a transition plan.
- Placements in AEDY transition programs are temporary; students may only remain until they have met their behavioral goals, unless expelled.
- English Learners (EL) and students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) cannot be placed at AEDY transition programs that cannot meet their instructional needs. The District's AEDY transition program, Achieve Academy, has the right to deny entry if they cannot adequately program for a student.

Discipline for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities can receive discipline in accordance with the code of conduct. They must also be provided with a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Schools must adhere to all regulations provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).

Suspensions

Suspension guidelines stated above apply to all students, including those with disabilities. In addition, the following regulations must be followed:

Students Identified as Intellectually Disabled

Students who are identified as intellectually disabled can only be removed from the school building for suspension or a disciplinary hearing if there is written agreement from the parent/guardian or written approval from the Bureau of Special Education of the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). The PDE can be contacted by calling 717-783-6913.

All Other Students Receiving Special Education Services or a 504 Plan

The District may suspend students who are receiving special education services for up to ten (10) consecutive school days or fifteen (15) cumulative school days in one school year without providing special education services as outlined in their IEP.

Manifestation Determination Process

A manifestation determination meeting must be conducted whenever there is a change in placement. For a student identified as intellectually disabled, a one (1) day suspension is considered a change in placement. For all other students with disabilities, a change in placement is considered a suspension of ten (10) consecutive days, fifteen (15) cumulative days, a series of removals that constitute a pattern of exclusion, and/or a disciplinary transfer.

The purpose of the manifestation determination meeting is to answer two questions:

1. Was the conduct caused by, or did it have a direct and substantial relationship to, the student's disability?
2. Was the conduct a direct result of the school's failure to implement the student's IEP?

If the behavior is not deemed a manifestation of the student's disability, the school may proceed with the recommended disciplinary action in accordance with the Code of Conduct. If the behavior is deemed a manifestation of the student's disability, the proposed change in placement may not be granted.

The following guidelines applies to the Manifestation Determination process:

- Provide written notice to the parent/guardian of the recommended disciplinary action and an invitation to participate in the manifestation determination meeting with the student's IEP team.
 - This meeting must take place within 10 days of the incident.
 - During the meeting, the student's most recent evaluation, IEP and placement will be reviewed as well as the details of the incident that led to proposed discipline.
 - The completed manifestation determination must be signed by the parent/guardian and IEP team, including School Psychologist.
- Issue a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP) with the results of the determination and a copy of the Procedural Safeguard Notice (PSN) to the parent/guardian.
 - If the parent/guardian disagrees with the decision that is made at the Manifestation Determination Meeting, they can request an expedited Special Education Hearing and the commonwealth-appointed hearing officer will review the manifestation determination. Directions on requesting a hearing can be found in the NOREP and must be completed within ten (10) days.
- Ensure IEP is in compliance as well as other corresponding documents if applicable. For example, a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) or Positive Behavior Support Plan (PBSP) may be needed in accordance with the IEP.

45-Day Interim Placements

Schools may request a 45-day interim placement without regard to the outcome of the manifestation determination if the incident involved one of the three (3) special circumstances under IDEA:

- Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function.
- Carries a weapon to or possesses a weapon at school, on school premises, or at a school function.
 - According to IDEA, a weapon is defined as a device, instrument, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury.
 - This does not include a pocket knife with a blade of less than 2½ inches in length or ordinary objects not designed to be weapons.
- Inflicted serious bodily injury (SBI) upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function.
 - According to IDEA, serious bodily injury is defined as a substantial risk of death; extreme physical pain; protracted and obvious disfigurement; or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty. SBI must be substantiated.

The purpose of the 45-day interim placement is for the student to receive interventions in an AEDY setting while the sending school IEP team re-assesses the student's programming and placement. The 45-day interim placement may not exceed 45 days.

If a student's behavior is not one of the three (3) Special Circumstances, is a manifestation of the student's disability and the student is likely to cause injury to themselves or others, a school leader can request an expedited hearing conducted by a special education hearing officer to obtain a 45-day placement. This request can be made to the Office of General Counsel.

Expulsion Procedures

According to Pennsylvania law, expulsion is defined as an exclusion from school and any school activities for more than ten (10) school days. Students who have committed an offense subject to expulsion may be referred for an informal disciplinary hearing and AEDY placement, at which point, it will be determined if a student should be recommended for formal expulsion.

The formal expulsion hearing process includes the following due process requirements:

- Notification of the violation(s) in writing by certified mail to the parent/guardian in their preferred language.
- At least three (3) days notice of the time and place of the hearing, which shall include a copy of the expulsion policy, hearing procedures, and notice of the right to representation by legal counsel.
- A student may request the rescheduling of the hearing when they demonstrate good cause for an extension.
- The hearing shall be private unless the student or parent/guardian requests a public hearing.
- Representation by counsel, at the parent/guardian expense.
- A Parent/Guardian may attend the hearing.
- Disclosure of the names of witnesses against the student and copies of their written statements or affidavits.
- The right to request that witnesses against the student appear in person and answer questions or be cross-examined.
- The right to testify, make arguments and present witnesses on the student's behalf.
- A written or audio record of the hearing shall be maintained and a copy made available to the student at the student's expense, or at no charge if the student is indigent.
 - The hearing shall be held within 15 school days of the notice of charges, unless a delay is mutually agreed to by both parties or is delayed by:
 - The need for laboratory reports from law enforcement agencies; or
 - Evaluations or other court or administrative proceedings are pending due to the student invoking their rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); or
 - Delay is necessary due to the condition or best interests of the victim in cases of juvenile or criminal court involving sexual assault or serious bodily injury.
- Notice of a right to appeal the results of the hearing shall be provided to the student and the parent/guardian with the expulsion decision in their preferred language.

If a student is expelled by the school board, the parent/guardian of the student has 30 days to provide written documentation that the student is in another educational program. If they are unable to find an alternative educational program, the District will provide for the student's education. A student who has been permanently expelled from the District by the affirmative vote of a majority of the school board may apply for readmission. The school board delegates authority for all readmission decisions to the Superintendent or their designee. Temporarily expelled students need not apply for readmission because they are automatically readmitted to the District at the end of the expulsion period. Readmission decisions are final and not subject to review by appeal to the school board or the courts.

Philadelphia Police Department Referrals

Some of the behavior infractions in the code of conduct are also considered crimes according to Pennsylvania state law. The District has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Philadelphia Police Department (PPD). The MOU explicitly states that the following crimes must be reported: Abductions and Attempts, Assaults, Bomb Scares, Burglary, Drug & Alcohol Offenses, Fire & False Alarms (Arson), Graffiti (if racial or threatening in nature), Child Abuse, Hate Crimes, Morals Offenses (sexual in nature), Property Damage, Robbery, Theft, Trespassing, and Weapons Offenses.

Students eleven (11) years old and younger will not be subject to arrest unless they have committed one of the enumerated crimes listed in the memorandum of understanding. Parents/Guardians of victims and of students should be contacted immediately about their student's involvement and attempts to contact parents should be documented.

The District also has a memorandum of understanding regarding the Diversion Program with the PPD. The Diversion Program allows the PPD to divert a student from arrest if that student has committed a non-violent offense in school and has no prior arrests. In those cases, the student will receive services from the Department of Human Services.

School Reporting Process

In schools with a School Safety Officer (SSO), when an incident occurs that may be a crime, the school leader should notify the SSO prior to making any police referral for the potential arrest of a student. All School Safety staff have received training on the Philadelphia Police School Diversion Program. The SSO will contact the PPD Diversion Program at 215-400-5526/215-400-5530 to determine if the offense is eligible. Offenses not eligible for diversion will be referred to the Philadelphia Police Department. Schools without a safety officer are directed to contact the PPD and their School Safety Area Manager.

Appendix - Behavior Matrix

The following behavior matrix includes a list of behaviors or code of conduct “violations,” rule numbers and corresponding definitions for schools to select the appropriate behavior when completing Office Discipline Referrals (ODR) and addressing incidents. The grade levels indicate what responses can be implemented per grade. For example, only grades 3-12 can receive out-of-school suspensions and only grades 6-12 can receive disciplinary hearings and/or expulsion. However, just because a behavior is eligible for a suspension or disciplinary hearing, does not mean a school must issue that response. “Does Not Apply” indicates that the response cannot be applied.

#	Behavior Definitions	School Based Responses Only	Short-Term Suspension Grades 3-12 1-3 days	Long-Term Suspension Grades 3-12 4-10 days	Disciplinary Hearing Referral Grades 6-12	Expulsion Grades 6-12
Classroom Managed Behaviors - Minors						
1	Profane Language/Gestures and Name Calling. Students who curse or use sexually explicit language/gestures toward another community member. Name calling includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> calling other community members outside of their preferred name making comments that are perceived as harmful but do not meet the District definition of bullying or harassment 	Grades K-12	Response does not apply	Response does not apply	Response does not apply	Response does not apply
2	Disruptive Classroom Behavior. Students who intentionally disrupt the school environment by not following expectations <i>despite</i> non-verbal and verbal redirection provided. Disruptive behavior includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> leaving assigned seat without permission speaking when voice level should be zero using phone in classroom without permission failing to adhere to posted classroom norms and/or play-fighting 	Grades K-12	Response does not apply	Response does not apply	Response does not apply	Response does not apply
3	Cheating. Students who submit or intend to submit work that is not their own, including plagiarism.	Grades K-12	Response does not apply	Response does not apply	Response does not apply	Response does not apply
4	Class Cutting/Elopement. Students who intentionally do not attend their classes on a consistent basis (weekly, daily), affecting student learning and school climate. This includes hall walking and elopement from the classroom/building.	Grades K-12	Response does not apply	Response does not apply	Response does not apply	Response does not apply
Misuse of School/Personal Property - Office Discipline Referral						
5	Forgery/Alteration of Grades, Excuse Notes, or School Documents. Students who reproduce the signature of another and/or alter documents or official school records such as grades, attendance or reports.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Response does not apply

#	Behavior Definitions	School Based Responses Only	Short-Term Suspension Grades 3-12 1-3 days	Long-Term Suspension Grades 3-12 4-10 days	Disciplinary Hearing Referral Grades 6-12	Expulsion Grades 6-12
6	Destruction of Property (Less than \$500). Students who damage or deface school property or the personal property of another school community member.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Response does not apply	Response does not apply	Response does not apply
7	Destruction of Property (More than \$500). Students who damage or deface school property or the personal property of another school community member.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Response does not apply
8	Theft (Less than \$500). Students who take school property or the personal property of another school community member.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Response does not apply	Response does not apply	Response does not apply
9	Theft (More than \$500). Students who take school property or the personal property of another school community member.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Response does not apply
10	Robbery. Students who take or attempt to take the property of another student or school community member by force, threat of force, or by putting the victim in fear.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Response does not apply
11	Unauthorized Entry into School Property. Students who gain entry to a school building at an unauthorized time. This includes: attending/visiting school <u>during suspension</u> or allowing themselves or other students/non-students into a school <u>not using the main visitor entrance</u> .	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Response does not apply
Physical Aggression - Office Discipline Referral						
12	Mutual Fight. Students who willingly engage in a <u>one-on-one</u> physical altercation. This is a physical altercation in which none of the participants are identified as victims.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Response does not apply	Response does not apply	Response does not apply
13	Mutual Group Fight. Students who willingly engage in a physical altercation with <u>multiple</u> willing participants. This is a physical altercation in which <u>none of the participants are identified as victims</u> .	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Response does not apply
14	Group Assault. Students, along with other community members, who participate in an assault against one or more community members. This is an incident in which participants can clearly be identified as <u>victims and offenders</u> .	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	*Grades 6-12
15	Assault. Students who hit, punch, kick, stab or physically harm a school community member in any way, intentionally and without provocation.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Response does not apply
16	*Causing Serious Bodily Injury. Students who intentionally engage in a <u>mutual fight</u> or <u>assault</u> that causes bodily injury to another community member. Bodily injury involves serious, permanent disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any body part or organ.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Grades 6-12

#	Behavior Definitions	School Based Responses Only	Short-Term Suspension Grades 3-12 1-3 days	Long-Term Suspension Grades 3-12 4-10 days	Disciplinary Hearing Referral Grades 6-12	Expulsion Grades 6-12
Physical Aggression - Office Discipline Referral						
17	<p>Reckless Endangerment. Students who take any action that creates a substantial risk such that serious harm could result to any community member.</p> <p>Reckless Endangerment includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • throwing objects that can cause harm across a room/out of a window • intentionally causing a community member to slip/fall • intentionally calling/engaging community members to incite violence • participating in a fight/altercation blocking traffic and/or creating safety risk • flashing/using a “lookalike” weapon 	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Response does not apply
Sexualized Behaviors, Bullying & Harassment - Office Discipline Referral						
18	Consensual Sexual Act. Students who engage in a consensual sexual act.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Response does not apply	Response does not apply
19	<p>Non-Consensual Inappropriate Touch. Students who engage in unwanted touching or exposure of themselves or another school community member.</p> <p>Any groping, grabbing, or exposure of private parts (their own or someone else’s) must be reported to the Title IX coordinator for possible harassment.</p>	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Response does not apply
20	<p>Harassment. Students who engage in unwelcome verbal, <u>written, graphic or physical conduct</u> relating to an individual's gender, age, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity expression, national origin, religion, disability, English language proficiency, socioeconomic status and/or political beliefs.</p> <p>Harassment criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • must be related to a protected class • must be considered severe, persistent OR pervasive • does not have to include intent to harm, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents. 	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Grades 6-12
21	<p>Bullying/Cyberbullying. Bullying is severe and pervasive conduct that must meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeated/persistent • Intentional • Includes an imbalance of power <p>Cyberbullying includes the same criteria, but occurs through electronic communication devices including but not limited to social networking, e-mail, messaging, texts, tweets, etc.</p>	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Grades 6-12

#	Behavior Definitions	School Based Responses Only	Short-Term Suspension Grades 3-12 1-3 days	Long-Term Suspension Grades 3-12 4-10 days	Disciplinary Hearing Referral Grades 6-12	Expulsion Grades 6-12
Sexualized Behaviors, Bullying & Harassment - Office Discipline Referral						
22	Inappropriate Use of an Electronic Device. Students who use electronics (cell phones, chromebooks etc.) in inappropriate ways, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sexting (sending sexual images/videos) recording fights recording someone in a place where they have an expectation of privacy posting content that materially impacts the school community, such as a weapon or perceived weapon 	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Response does not apply
Threats & Intimidation - Office Discipline Referral						
23	Threats/Intimidation. Students who threaten to engage in an act that causes harm and induces fear in another community member. Threats can be made verbally, in writing, with gestures or on social media. Intimidation can include persistent looks, following someone and/or <u>intentionally</u> trying to make another fearful.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Response does not apply
24	Threatening Mass Violence. Students who threaten to engage in an act that causes serious physical harm or creates a substantial risk of serious physical harm to a school community.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Grades 6-12
Hazing & Gang Affiliation - Office Discipline Referral						
25	Hazing. Students who for the purpose of initiating or enhancing a student's membership in a school organization/activity causes or forces that student to violate any criminal law, consume a substance that subjects the student to harm, endure physical, mental or sexual brutality or perform any activity that endangers another.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Response does not apply
26	Gang Affiliation. Students who engage in dangerous activities on behalf of an identified gang to commit disruptive or illegal acts on school property on behalf of the gang.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Grades 6-12
Tobacco, Drugs & Alcohol - Office Discipline Referral						
27	Possession/Use of Tobacco. Students who use or possess tobacco or any electronic smoking device. This includes but is not limited to products containing tobacco, electronic cigarettes, cigars, vaping, and hookah.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Response does not apply	Response does not apply	Response does not apply
28	Possession/Use of Alcohol or Drugs. Students who are found to be in possession or who use alcohol/other drugs, which includes drugs in edible/liquid/vape form.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Response does not apply

#	Behavior Definitions	School Based Responses Only	Short-Term Suspension Grades 3-12 1-3 days	Long-Term Suspension Grades 3-12 4-10 days	Disciplinary Hearing Referral Grades 6-12	Expulsion Grades 6-12
Tobacco, Drugs & Alcohol - Office Discipline Referral						
29	Distribution of Alcohol or Drugs. Students who are found to be selling and/or distributing alcohol or drugs, which includes drugs in edible/liquid form.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Grades 6-12
Incendiary Devices & Weapons - Office Discipline Referral						
30	<p>Possession/Use of a Weapon. Students who possess any object, device, or instrument, which, in its inherent and functional purpose is intended to be a weapon.</p> <p><u>Weapons include</u> firearms, whether loaded or not, bullets/loaded magazine, cap guns, BB guns, airsoft guns, bombs, knives, box cutters, cutting instruments, nunchaku, taser or mace.</p> <p><u>Weapons do NOT include</u> water or gel blaster/orbeez toy guns, or ordinary objects. These can be considered “reckless endangerment” if used/intended to be used inappropriately.</p>	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Grades 6-12
31	Possession of Incendiary Devices or Explosives. Students who are found to be in possession of incendiary devices such as matches, lighters, fireworks, firecrackers and/or other explosives.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Response does not apply
32	Use of Incendiary Devices or Explosives. Students who use or activate incendiary devices such as matches, lighters, fireworks, firecrackers and/or other explosives. This may include accidental or intentional fire starting.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Grades 6-12



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA

2024-2025 CODE OF CONDUCT



For more information visit

bit.ly/sdpcoc

*The information in this handbook
may be updated during the course
of the school year.*

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The School District of Philadelphia does not discriminate in employment or education programs or activities based on race, creed, color, national origin, religion, ancestry, age, marital status, sexual orientation (known or perceived), gender identity expression (known or perceived), sex, handicap, disability, nationality, citizenship, union membership, or limited English proficiency.

This policy of non-discrimination extends to all other legally protected classifications.

Publications of this notice are in accordance with state and federal laws including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.