
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR'S GUIDE TO POLICY NOTIFICATION 2009-2010



Each school principal is directed to inform all students, parents/guardians, and staff of the following policies at the beginning of each school year, and at other times when deemed appropriate. This may be done in the following ways:

- Make announcements via the public address system at the beginning of the school year.
- Publish the information in school newsletters.
- Publish the information in student handbooks, etc.
- Post the information on a bulletin board.
- Make the information available for new students through the registration process.

Acceptable Use of Computer Technology (Policy 8080)

Alcohol, Other Drugs, Prescription Medication and Over the Counter Products (Policy 9230)

Attendance (Policy 9010)

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Student Assault and/or Battery on School Staff (Policy 9270)

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Student Rights and Responsibilities (Policy 9020)

Student Use and Possession of Tobacco (Policy 9240)

Safe School Environments (Policy 1040)

Weapons (Policy 9250)

ACCEPTABLE USE OF COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY (POLICY 8080)

Computer hardware and software, Internet resources, and all associated files and data are to be used in a responsible, ethical and legal manner. The misuse of the school system's computer technology is grounds for discipline, ranging from the temporary or permanent termination of user privileges to suspension, expulsion, or termination.

Students are responsible for their behavior on school computer networks. Students may not reveal personally identifiable information, such as home phone numbers, addresses, or social security numbers.

Where independent access to the Internet is available, parent permission is required, and both the student and the parent or guardian must sign a Use of Internet Permission Form. By signing this form, the student agrees to provisions of this policy and user guidelines.

Students will access only those network resources for which they have obtained permission, using the account assigned to them. Students may not access online games or install software on school system equipment without the permission of a faculty member.

Students may not create, access, download, store, or print files, messages, or images that:

- Depict profanity, obscenity, the use of weapons, or violence
- Promote use of tobacco, drugs, alcohol, or other illegal or harmful products
- Contain sexually suggestive messages
- Are sexually explicit or obscene
- Depict gang affiliation
- Contain language or symbols that demean an identifiable person or group or otherwise infringe on the rights of others
- Cause or are likely to cause a substantial or material disruption to school activities or the orderly operation of the school
- Contain rude, disrespectful, or discourteous expressions inconsistent with civil discourse and behavior
- Constitute bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment, or intimidation in violation of Policy 1040, Safe School Environments.

Violations of this policy by a student may result in disciplinary action under the guidelines of Policy 9200, Discipline and the Student Code of Conduct.

ALCOHOL OTHER DRUGS, PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION AND OVER THE COUNTER DRUGS (POLICY 9230)

The possession, use, or distribution of alcoholic beverages and other drugs on school premises or at school-related or school-sponsored activities is prohibited. Prescription medication and over-the-counter products require written medication orders and are to be administered in accordance with school system Health Services procedures. Legal searches and seizures related to this policy may be conducted on school property.

Confidentiality is guaranteed for students who seek counseling for drug or alcohol abuse problems.

For a first offense, a student found using or in possession of alcoholic beverages or other drugs will be suspended from school for up to 30 school days and will be suspended from attendance at, participation in, and practice for, all extracurricular and school activities for 30 school days. Exclusion from commencement exercises is only applicable if it occurs during the suspension from school. The student will be referred for mandatory counseling in a licensed addictions program.

A second offense results in a suspension of up to 45 school days and suspension from attendance at, participation in, and practice for all extracurricular activities for the remainder of the current semester and the next consecutive semester. Exclusion from commencement exercises is only applicable if it occurs during the suspension from school. The student will be referred for mandatory counseling in a licensed addictions program.

A third violation results in expulsion.

Possession or use of prescription medication or over-the-counter products in the absence of, or inconsistent with, a written medication order, will result in a suspension of up to 30 school days for a first offense. A school administrator may consider a lesser consequence than suspension under certain circumstances.

A second offense may result in suspension from school for up to 30 school days and from attendance at, participation in, and the practice for, all extracurricular and school-related activities for 30 school days. The student may be

referred for mandatory counseling in a licensed addictions program.

A lesser consequence can be considered based on the consequence for the first offense.

A third offense, may result in a suspension of up to 45 school days and suspension from attendance at, participation in, and practice for all extracurricular and school-related activities for the remainder of the current semester and the next consecutive semester. The student may be referred for mandatory counseling in a licensed addictions program. Consequences for a third offense are also dependent on the consequences assigned for the first two offenses.

Students who distribute or intend to distribute alcohol or other drugs on school property will be suspended from school for not less than 45 school days or expelled. If suspended, the student also will be suspended from attendance at, participation in, and practice for all extracurricular and school-related activities for the remainder of the semester and the next consecutive semester. The student will be referred for mandatory counseling in a licensed addictions program.

A second violation results in expulsion.

A school administrator may consider a lesser consequence than suspension if the student distributes an over-the-counter product that can be clearly identified. If this condition is not met, the administrator will suspend the student for up to 45 school days.

A second offense results in a suspension for up to 45 school days and suspension from attendance at, participation in, and practice for all extracurricular and school-related activities for the remainder of the semester and the next consecutive semester. The student will be referred for mandatory counseling in a licensed addictions program.

Subsequent violations will result in suspension of not less than 45 school days or expulsion. If suspended, the student also will be suspended from attendance at, participation in, and practice for all extracurricular and school-related activities for the remainder of the semester and the next consecutive semester. The student will be referred for mandatory counseling in a licensed addictions program.

ATTENDANCE (POLICY 9010)

Regular daily attendance is vital to the continuity of classroom instruction and participation in school activities. Therefore, students are required to be in school or to be attending a school activity

each day school is in session. In recognition that situations do arise that necessitate absence from school, the Board of Education allows students to be lawfully absent for a death in the family, illness, a court summons, hazardous weather as determined by the Superintendent, work release, religious obligation, declared State emergencies, suspension, or for other emergencies or set of circumstances which in the judgment of the Superintendent or designee constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence.

BULLYING, CYBERBULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR INTIMIDATION (POLICY 1060)

The Board of Education is committed to fostering a climate in which individuals are valued and their safety and rights are protected. To that end, the Board prohibits acts of bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment, or intimidation because these behaviors compromise the learning environment and wellbeing of students, staff, and community.

Students, parents, employees and service providers are responsible for reporting incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, intimidation, and retaliation. When a student reports that he/she is currently the target/victim of one or more of these behaviors, the staff members to whom the report is made will respond quickly and appropriately to intervene and report the incident to a school administrator. The staff member will also make an effort to provide the student with a practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate way of discussing the incident(s).

All reports of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidations will be documented. Additionally, the student, a staff member, parent or close adult relative should complete and submit the *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form*.

At the onset of an investigation, the target/victim and witnesses will be informed that confidentiality cannot be insured because it is not possible to predict what will be discovered as a result of the investigation. They will be informed that the information discussed and recorded will be shared on a “need to know” basis only.

In accordance with due process rights, the school administrator will:

- Immediately notify the parents of the target/victim and the parents of the offender.
- Notify the alleged offender of the allegations.
- Allow the alleged offender an opportunity to respond to the allegations and encourage him/her to provide a written response when appropriate.
- Notify the parent promptly, in writing, of the violation and disciplinary consequence when the behavior warrants detention or Saturday school, exclusion or suspension.

The offender will be informed that retaliation against any target/victim or bystander is strictly prohibited and that progressive consequences will occur if the activity continues.

Appropriate support services based on age and context, situation, and severity of the incident will be provided to a student or staff member exhibiting bullying behaviors or to the target/victim or bystander. A student or staff member who violates this policy may be required to participate in appropriate counseling or intervention designated by the school administrator and designed to increase the student or staff member's understanding of the offense and its impact on others.

CIVILITY (POLICY 1000)

The Board of Education has set clear expectations for civil behavior that supports a safe, welcoming, and nurturing environment on school property and at school-related activities. Unacceptable behaviors include but are not limited to:

- Rude, insulting, or demeaning language and/or actions
- Persistently unreasonable demands
- Intrusive and/or interruptive behavior
- Displays of temper
- Harassment and intimidation
- Threatening and/or abusive gestures and behavior.

Each individual is responsible for behaving in a civil manner and for cooperating in resolving incidents of uncivil behavior.

When resolution is not reached through cooperative agreement either party involved may cite this policy and notify the other person that they are ending the conversation or the interaction and removing themselves from the situation by ending a

phone call, walking out of the room, or requesting the other individual leave the room.

DISCIPLINE (POLICY 9200)

Student behavior is the shared responsibility of the school, the student, and the home. The professional staff at a school has the responsibility for taking appropriate action when a student is involved in a situation that is not conducive to a safe and orderly environment.

Disciplinary consequences should be designed to change inappropriate behavior, encourage responsible actions, and promote the development of self-discipline. The student has the right to be informed of the reasons for disciplinary action. The Board of Education has approved the following forms of discipline:

- **Alternative Educational Settings** are settings within or outside of the home school designed to accommodate the needs of students who have demonstrated, due to disciplinary reasons, an inability or unwillingness to function in a regular setting, or who present a serious physical threat to themselves or others. Alternative educational settings include but are not limited to in-school suspensions, Saturday School, Homewood Center, and evening school.
- **Behavior Intervention Plan** is a proactive strategy designed to address problem behaviors exhibited by a student in the education setting through the use of positive behavior interventions, strategies, and supports.
- **Detention** is the placement of a student in a supervised school setting during the school day, before or after school, and on Saturdays.
- **Expulsion** is the removal of a student from school, either for a specified period of time or permanently, as determined by the Superintendent or designee.
- **Restricted Access** limits the time a student may be present on school property to the academic school day.
- **Suspension** is the denial of a student's right to attend regular classes and school for a specified period of time for cause.

This policy applies during school hours as well as at other times and places, including but not limited to, school buses, school-sponsored events, field trips, athletic functions, and any other activity where school administrators have jurisdiction over students. Other procedures may apply when a student is receiving special education services or has a 504 plan.

Disciplinary action may also be taken for off-campus incidents in accordance with Policy 2980, Students Charged with Community or Reportable Offenses.

Any student who is suspended from school is precluded from attendance at or participation in extracurricular or school-related activities during the period of the suspension. When a graduating senior is suspended for 10 days or less, and the period of suspension includes the day of commencement, the student may appeal directly to the Superintendent.

DISCRIMINATION (POLICY 1010)

The Board of Education is committed to providing an educational and work environment that is free from discrimination, fosters equitable opportunities, and values diversity and commonality. To that end, the Board prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, physical or mental disability, age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation in its educational program, including co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, and in the workplace.

Furthermore, the Board recognizes its responsibility to promote the worth and dignity of all individuals through curriculum, instruction, professional development, and resource selection. Employees and third parties share responsibility for the health, safety, and general welfare of students and for contributing to an environment free from discrimination.

It is a violation of this policy for any student, employee, or third party to engage in acts of discrimination in schools, school system offices, or at school-related activities. It is a violation of this policy to engage in retaliation with regard to allegations of discrimination. Violations of this policy are cumulative; subsequent offenses may affect the nature and severity of the consequences.

DRESS CODE (POLICY 9210)

Student dress and responsibility are the basic responsibility of students and their parents/

guardians as long as they are consistent with the school system's responsibility to ensure that school environments are healthy and safe, and conducive to student learning. It is a violation of this policy for any student to wear attire that interferes with the educational mission of the schools, is disruptive to the school environment, or that could endanger the health or safety of that student or others during school hours and school activities. This includes, but is not limited to, attire that:

- Unduly exposes or reveals skin or undergarments. This may include: tank tops; halter tops; tops which are strapless, low cut, or expose the midriff; pants worn low or loose that expose skin or undergarments.
- Causes or is likely to cause a substantial or material disruption to school activities or the orderly operation of the school. This may include buttons, display bands, armbands, flags, decals or other badges of symbolic expression.
- Involves any form of headgear inside the school building during the school day. Specific examples of headgear include hats, visors, scarves, and bandannas, sweatbands and forehead bands. Hats and headgear will be confiscated based on each school's policy.
- Depicts profanity, obscenity, the use of weapons, or violence.
- Promotes use of tobacco, drugs, alcohol, or other illegal or harmful products.
- Contains sexually suggestive messages.
- Depicts gang affiliation.
- Contains language or symbols that demean an identifiable person or group or infringe on the rights of others.
- Contains rude, disrespectful, or discourteous expressions inconsistent with civil discourse and behavior.

Alleged violations arising from attire worn for medical reasons or as an expression of a student's religious practices shall be given special consideration before a final determination is made. Personal appearance is expected to meet health and sanitary standards. Any disciplinary action for a violation of this policy is administered using the Howard County Student Code of Conduct and the Discipline Policy.

GRADING AND REPORTING (POLICIES 8010 AND 8020)

The Board of Education is committed to ensuring that all students meet or exceed rigorous performance standards. Accordingly, grading and achievement information must be determined in a consistent manner and regularly reported to students and their parents. Grading and promotion within the school system is based on the degree of success the individual student has achieved in the educational program. Decisions regarding promotion, retention and acceleration are made based on a student's performance and academic progress over the entire school year.

The grading system for kindergarten through Grade 8 includes evaluation, effort, and instructional codes and/or comments. When the performance of any K-8 student is below grade level the teacher, with appropriate participation of parents, will develop strategies and apply appropriate interventions to assist the student.

The decision to retain or accelerate a student is based on a number of factors that may include but are not limited to:

- Academic achievement level
- Demonstrated progress in response to academic interventions
- Age of the student
- Previous retention or acceleration
- Attendance record
- Parental concerns
- Developmental, health, and emotional factors
- Report card
- IEP or 504 Plan

An elementary student who is not performing on grade level in reading and mathematics will automatically be considered for retention.

Middle school students must meet the following requirements or automatically be considered for retention. To pass from one grade to the next, a middle student must pass all courses and receive a final grade of not lower than "C" in English, social studies, reading, mathematics, and science. A student who does not meet this requirement may be recommended to attend summer school. Any student below grade level in reading and/or mathematics at the end of eighth grade will be required to participate in appropriate interventions.

In high school, an 11-letter grading system is used to indicate the achievement of each student in relation to attainment of course objectives. No plus

or minus signs are used for official records. The following factors are used in determining level of achievement:

- Competence
- Assignments and preparation
- Participation
- Daily classroom work habits

School staff will communicate with students and parents on a regular basis the level of academic performance in the essential curriculum (Grades K-8) or in relation to attainment of course objectives (Grades 9-12) as measured by county, teacher-made and other assessments, and by teacher observations via individual conferences, progress reports, and report cards.

PUPIL TRANSPORTATION – STUDENT CONDUCT (POLICY 5210)

It is the school system's responsibility to provide safe transportation for students who ride school buses to and from school and on school-related trips. The school bus driver is responsible for ensuring that students behave in a safe and responsible manner and that any behavior that interferes with the safe transportation of students is prohibited.

This policy applies to all students, public and nonpublic, for whom bus transportation is provided by the Howard County Public School System, with the exception of special education students. Behavior problems with special education students are dealt with in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Student infractions of the rules/guidelines regarding student conduct on school buses may lead to the temporary suspension of transportation services.

SAFE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS (POLICY 1040)

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

Threats, profanity, defamation, harassment, intimidation, bullying, physical attacks, gang related activities, and hazing are prohibited on school property, on a school bus, at a school bus stop, or in connection with any school-related activity. These behaviors also constitute a violation of policy when they have a direct effect on the order and general welfare of the school, such as negatively affecting the safety or learning environment of a classroom, even when they do not occur on school property or at a school-related activity.

Students, employees and third parties engaging in these behaviors are subject to disciplinary and/or legal action. Students who violate this policy may also be subject to appropriate educational interventions and/or counseling.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT (POLICY 1020)

The Board of Education of Howard County is committed to providing an educational and work environment that is free from sexual harassment. To that end, the Board of Education prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in its educational program, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, and in the workplace, as required by law.

Employees and third parties share responsibility for the health, safety and general welfare of students; for contributing to a school environment free from sexual harassment; and for maintaining appropriate relationships with students. Employees, students, and third parties may be subject to disciplinary action or consequences for inappropriate behavior of a sexual nature, even when the behavior does not rise to the level of sexual harassment as defined by prevailing federal and state laws.

It is a violation of this policy for any student, employee, or third party to engage in sexual harassment or to engage in retaliation with regard to complaints of sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment of an individual is the unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that interferes with a student's ability to learn, study, work, achieve, or participate in school activities or with an employee's/third party's term, condition, or privilege of employment/ relationship with the school system. Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to: offensive language; visual harassment such as derogatory posters, photography, cartoons, drawings, clothing or gestures; offensive touching; unwelcome sexual

advances or sexual contact; spreading rumors about or evaluating someone for their sexual behavior; taunting or ridiculing someone because of perceived or actual sexual orientation; or pressuring someone for sexual activity.

A student who chooses to file a sexual harassment complaint must do so orally or in writing with a teacher, school counselor, school-based administrator, or the Title IX Coordinator for action in accordance with established procedures. All such reports must be filed with or forwarded to the Equity Assurance Coordinator for investigation.

A school system employee or third party who chooses to file a sexual harassment complaint must do so with the Title IX Coordinator or with a school-based administrator or supervisor as appropriate. All such reports must be forwarded to the Title IX Coordinator for investigation.

In all phases of complaint resolution, every reasonable effort shall be made to maintain the confidentiality and protect the privacy of all parties. These efforts may be limited by the school system's legal and regulatory obligation to investigate and address allegations of sexual harassment.

Upon completion of an investigation of a complaint received by the Title IX Coordinator, the Coordinator will send a prompt, written report of the findings and actions to be taken, if any, within confidentiality guidelines to the appropriate parties.

Violations of this policy are cumulative; subsequent offenses may affect the nature and severity of the consequences. Use and/or exhaustion of these procedures is not a prerequisite for the filing of complaints with the Office for Civil Rights.

STUDENT ASSAULT AND/OR BATTERY ON SCHOOL STAFF (POLICY 9270)

In order for learning to take place, the school environment must be safe and orderly. Therefore, any physical assault by a student on a school staff member is strictly forbidden. Any student who violates this policy will be suspended from school and subject to transfer. Any student involved in a second assault on school staff will be expelled.

STUDENT REPRESENTATION (POLICY 2010)

The Board of Education recognizes the value of contributions of students in the regular meetings of the Board and encourages this participation by establishing the position of Student Member to the Board of Education of Howard County and by establishing the position of student representative in each high school. The Student Member is elected by a plurality of student voters in Grades 6 through 11 countywide and serves a one-year term beginning with the first regularly scheduled meeting of the Board in June. Student representatives are elected in their high schools and serve a one-year term.

STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (POLICY 9020)

The responsibilities and rights of all citizens are guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, the due process amendment of the U.S. Constitution and federal and state laws. The rights of the individual are preserved only through the protection and preservation of the rights of others. Students have a responsibility for their own learning, for their personal conduct, and for the manner in which they exercise their rights. Students must accept the consequences of their actions. Students have the responsibility to participate in the educational program offered by their schools and, in doing so, are bound by the policies of the Howard County Public School System.

Students have specific responsibilities and rights related to school attendance, student expression, disciplinary action, due process, search and seizure, student records, student activities, use of school facilities, and non-discriminatory practices.

STUDENT USE AND POSSESSION OF TOBACCO (POLICY 9240)

The use or possession of any tobacco product or cigarette rolling papers by students is prohibited in school buildings, in school vehicles, on school property and at school bus stops at all times.

For a first violation, the student and his/her parent will receive referral information on a tobacco use cessation program administered by a public health agency or private provider. In addition, the student will be assigned to the Tobacco Management Class held as part of the HCPSS Saturday school program. Failure to attend the Tobacco Management

Class will result in an out-of-school suspension for one school day.

For a second offense, the student will be suspended for three school days. The student will have the option of enrolling in a tobacco use cessation program administered by a public health agency or private provider instead of serving the suspension. The school administrator will provide the parent with referral information for that program. If the student chooses this option, proof of enrollment must be provided to the school administrator. If proof of enrollment is not provided within five school days, the student will be required to serve the three-day suspension.

A student who violates this policy a third time will be suspended for five school days. The student will have the option of enrolling in a tobacco use cessation program administered by a public health agency or private provider instead of serving the five-day suspension. The school administrator will provide the parent with referral information for that program. If the student chooses this option, proof of enrollment must be provided to a school administrator. If proof of enrollment is not provided within five school days, the student will be required to serve the five-day suspension.

For fourth and subsequent offenses, the student will be suspended for ten school days and referred to the Superintendent/Designee. The Superintendent/Designee will conduct an additional investigation and may assign a suspension of up to twenty school days. The student may choose to serve the suspension or to enroll in and complete a tobacco use cessation program administered by a public health agency or private provider. If the student chooses this option, proof of enrollment must be provided to the Superintendent/Designee within a period of time determined by the Superintendent/Designee. If proof of enrollment and completion are not provided, the student will be required to serve the designated length of suspension.

WEAPONS (POLICY 9250)

The presence of weapons on school property poses a serious threat to the safety and well being of students and staff. It is unlawful for any person to carry or possess any rifle, gun, knife, or deadly weapon of any kind on any public school property in the state of Maryland. A weapons, as defined by school system policy, includes: any gun, dirk knives, bowie knives, switchblade knives, star knives, buck knives, hunting knives, throwing stars, razors, metal knuckles, nunchakus, explosive devices, or any other object or implement intended to cause harm to another or used in such a way as to cause harm to another. Any student found in possession of a weapon on school property will be suspended and the police notified. Possession of a gun, or any implement possessed under a circumstance that would reasonably lead a person to believe it was a gun, will result in expulsion.

Copies of entire policies and supporting procedures are available on the Howard County Public School System website at www.hcpss.org.