

FCPS

2023 | 2024

**PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK
AND STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**



F R E D E R I C K C O U N T Y P U B L I C S C H O O L S

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Introduction

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) strives to create safe, positive, healthy, and inviting school climates that foster respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. It is the responsibility of administrators, staff, and parents/families working together to teach students the behavior, social, and emotional skills needed to be successful in schools and in life. School is a safe place to learn, to make mistakes, and to explore new ideas. Students learn to collaborate, develop empathy for others, manage and express their emotions and behaviors in healthy ways, and take responsibility for their actions. Skills including self-awareness, self-discipline, social-awareness, cultural competency, developing positive relationships, and responsible decision-making are taught in various ways throughout a student's FCPS academic career.

The FCPS Board of Education Policy 403 Student Discipline provides a philosophy of behavior intervention that is rehabilitative, restorative, and educational. Discipline is to be fair and equitable. Behavioral expectations and consequences are to be clearly communicated and implemented consistently in alignment with the FCPS Student Code of Conduct. FCPS Board Policies 117 Anti Racism, 443 Creating Welcoming and Affirming Schools for Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students, and 444 Educational Equity and Excellence further affirm the expectations of student discipline in order to ensure equitable access to educational opportunities for all FCPS students.

The *FCPS Student Code of Conduct* provides a framework to foster positive behavior in alignment with the school system's core mission of demonstrating excellence in the following goal areas:



All students are expected to demonstrate behavior in alignment with the expectations contained in this document. Parents/guardians are encouraged to read and reinforce the expectations with their children. Questions or comments about the handbook should be directed to your school's principal or to the FCPS Student Services Department at (301) 644-5238.

Philosophy of Discipline

The Frederick County Board of Education Policy 403 and Regulation 403-01 Student Discipline set forth the expectation that all schools will have a safe, positive, healthy, and inviting environment, which fosters respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, fairness, caring, and good citizenship.

Each school is expected to cultivate student engagement, celebrate student achievement, and proactively develop and maintain positive school cultures that prevent misbehavior.

Schools are communities in which positive behavior is expected, modeled, and learned best within an environment of mutual respect and dignity. In order to grow into healthy, productive adults, students require respectful learning environments where each person is valued and is trusted to contribute positively to the creation and maintenance of the community.

When that community is disrupted, FCPS educators and administrators seek to understand, acknowledge, and address the underlying causes of the disruption. Students are afforded opportunities to learn from their mistakes, correct any harm that results from their behavior, and restore relationships that are disrupted.

FCPS utilizes a multi-tiered system of support for students, which includes a continuum of instructional strategies and behavior interventions to support the teaching and learning process. Staff receive training on how to implement positive behavior support to maximize students' availability for learning. When a disciplinary approach is necessary, administrators apply progressive discipline (escalating consequences for patterns of inappropriate behavior which have persisted, despite less intensive consequences) whenever appropriate.

Student Expectations

Through the implementation of the FCPS Multi-tiered Systems of Support Framework, students are informed and taught appropriate behavioral expectations for school, school-sponsored events, and FCPS-sponsored transportation.

FCPS believes that when students are provided with clear expectations and are regularly acknowledged for appropriate behavior, they are less likely to demonstrate misbehavior.

Students are expected to:

- Come to school everyday on time and ready to learn.
- Engage in all learning experiences.
- Complete independent learning experiences and submit assignments in a timely manner.
- Give their best effort and persist in their work.
- Seek clarification, when needed, to understand the expectations for grading and attendance.
- Set personal goals and be aware of their academic progress.
- Ask questions and actively seek assistance from teachers and other school staff when they need support.
- Build positive and supportive relationships with students and staff, demonstrating the acceptance of differences, with regards to, but not limited to, ability (cognitive, social-emotional, and physical), age, ethnicity, family structure, gender, gender expression, gender identity, language, nationality, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomics.
- Practice self-care strategies and seek support when needed.
- Be knowledgeable about school behavioral expectations and available resources.
- Recognize how their actions affect other students and school staff and, if harm occurs, engage in the process to restore relationships.
- Avoid participating in any behavior or activity that intentionally or unintentionally causes harm to self or others.
- Contribute to a positive classroom community where all students are able to learn in a supportive, safe, and welcoming environment.
- Seek and participate in opportunities to express values, opinions, beliefs, and perspectives in a respectful and civil manner.

Staff Responsibilities

FCPS staff work to create a safe, positive, healthy, and inviting school environment for all students and adults that is conducive to teaching and learning. They serve as the caring adults in schools, who play an important role in building strong relationships with students to enhance social and emotional competencies and decrease their likelihood of engaging in disruptive behaviors.

FCPS staff members are responsible to:

- Be knowledgeable about FCPS policies, regulations, and available resources to support students and staff.
- Establish a positive school culture that focuses on building relationships with staff, students, families and community through restorative practices.
- Support students' social-emotional skills development by providing a safe, nurturing, and inclusive culture that embraces diversity and racial equity.
- Plan and implement high-quality, engaging instruction that meets the needs of diverse learners using Maryland College and Career Readiness standards and FCPS curriculum.
- Ensure identified students receive required English Learner and Special Education services, Section 504 accommodations, and other necessary supports to address diverse learning needs.
- Monitor, support, and foster a classroom community where all students can learn in a positive, supportive, safe, and welcoming environment.
- Encourage students to establish a learning environment that supports their engagement.
- Accept and support students' identities and experiences with regards to, but not limited to, ability (cognitive, social-emotional, and physical), age, ethnicity, family structure, gender, gender expression, gender identity, language, nationality, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomics. Demonstrate how diverse backgrounds enhance the educational experience.
- Acknowledge and seek to correct personal biases and assumptions about students' backgrounds.
- Communicate with families in a timely manner that is accessible and easily understood.
- Collaborate with families to enhance learning opportunities, personal and academic growth, and school success for all students.
- Acknowledge positive and appropriate student behavior.
- Administer discipline fairly, consistently, and equitably, as required, to eliminate disproportionate disciplinary practices.
- Apply de-escalation strategies and provide time and space for students and/or staff to reset. Request support as needed.
- Model regular and predictable attendance.
- Utilize disciplinary practices that allow the student to remain in the learning environment as much as possible

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Parents serve as their child's first and most important teacher, and this responsibility continues throughout the rest of their life. As students grow and mature, parents/guardians should continue to talk with their children about appropriate conduct at school and help their children be active participants in creating and promoting a positive, supportive, safe, and welcoming school environment that is conducive to teaching and learning.

Parents/guardians are responsible to:

- Support their child's attendance and engagement in all learning experiences.
- Create a learning environment at home to support their child's academic and social-emotional learning.
- Encourage and reinforce the importance of their child building positive relationships by valuing and respecting diversity.
- Support their child in learning and using self-care strategies to help achieve their goals and maintain well-being.
- Establish regular communication with their child's teachers to clarify learning expectations and support academic and social-emotional progress.
- Encourage their child to seek assistance and support from FCPS staff and advocate for them when necessary.
- Be active in their child's educational growth by participating in family activities that support learning and well-being outside of the school setting.
- Send their child to school prepared and ready to learn and, upon returning home, encourage them to complete homework and other school assignments.
- Review Schoology for student progress reports to monitor attendance and academic progress.
- Be knowledgeable about FCPS policies, regulations, and available resources to support their child.
- Reinforce lessons learned from disciplinary consequences.
- Reimburse FCPS for any financial obligations incurred by their child in school. This includes lost books, FCPS digital devices, damage to property, etc.

Community Partners Support

FCPS proudly partners with many organizations to make a sustainable impact on student success and the mission of the school system. Across the district, we have community partners in our schools that provide their time, resources, and/or financial support. We believe that partnerships are an integral component to school and student success.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

FCPS uses a continuum of instructional strategies and behavior intervention responses to support the teaching and learning process. There are three tiers:

Tier 1: Universal Supports

Tier 1 supports serve as the foundation for behavior and academics, and are provided for ALL students, including those also receiving interventions from Tier 2 or Tier 3. A robust, data-informed Tier 1 will successfully meet the needs of eighty to ninety percent of students.

Tier 2: Targeted Intervention

This level of support focuses on addressing specific under-developed skills of some students, some of the time. Tier 2 supports are often provided within small student groups by specialized personnel (intervention teacher, school counselor, social worker, etc), but can also be individualized when appropriate. Tier 2

supports are intended to help students develop the skills they need to succeed at school.

Tier 3: Intensive, Individualized Interventions

Tier 3 supports are the most intensive interventions and take an individualized approach of developing and carrying out interventions. At this level, schools typically rely on formal assessments to determine a student's need and develop an individualized support plan. Student plans often include goals related to both academics as well as behavioral support. (Center for PBIS, 2022)

Restorative Practices

Building on FCPS's commitment to equity, FCPS is continuing to work to embed equity, restorative practices, and trauma-informed care and rehabilitation as part of our schools' culture, climate, and expectations.

Restorative Practices is a continuum of relationship-focused processes that include preventative, proactive, and responsive measures for both staff and students. These practices help to create a sense of, and a commitment to, community that helps to prevent and address conflict and wrongdoing, as follows:

- focus on the harm caused by wrongdoing more than the rule or law that was broken;
- empower those who have been harmed, and demonstrate equal concern for their needs within the discipline process;
- support individuals who have harmed others, while encouraging them to take personal responsibility for their actions and understand, accept, and fulfill their obligation to repair the harm that has occurred;
- encourage collaboration and reintegration, rather than punishment and isolation;
- involve individuals who have harmed others in the decision making around consequences; and
- anticipate and address situations that may challenge a school community, such as physical conflict or re-entry of members into the community who have been apart for disciplinary reasons.

Unlike using only the traditional approach to discipline, which focuses on blame, broken rules, and punishment, restorative-focused approach asks three very different questions:

1. Who was hurt?
2. What are the needs of those affected, and what needs to be done to repair the harm?
3. Who has the obligation to address these needs, repair the harm, and restore the relationship?

Restorative Practices implementation is a mindset shift that requires diligence for adoption, implementation, and adaptation. This change in mindset is essential to creating truly restorative school communities, where the focus is on relationships, collaboration, and engagement among students, staff, families, and the greater school community. FCPS offers districtwide training in the fundamentals of restorative practices.

Elementary, middle and high schools are encouraged to use restorative approaches to build community, resolve conflict, and restore relationships. All stakeholders in a community, including students, staff, parents, and community benefit from restorative practices.

NOTE: There may be instances when Restorative Practices are not appropriate as a response to certain behaviors. This may be the case when incidents of bullying or hate-based speech occur.

During these instances, school staff has been trained on effectively addressing incidents when a student demonstrates perceived power over another and it would not be appropriate to have a targeted student in conversation with an offender.

Application of the Student Code of Conduct and Levels of Response

The behavior interventions/consequences apply to students at all times while they are on FCPS property or attending a FCPS-sponsored event. FCPS property is defined as any school or other FCPS facility, including grounds owned or operated by FCPS, and FCPS-sponsored transportation. Student conduct occurring outside school hours and away from school property may be subject to disciplinary action if the principal reasonably believes that the conduct threatens the health or safety of students or staff in the school setting, or if conduct causes or is reasonably expected to cause substantial disruption or material interference with school activities.

Discipline is intended to teach and motivate students to demonstrate appropriate behavior. FCPS utilizes progressive discipline (escalating consequences for patterns of inappropriate behavior which have persisted despite less intensive consequences)

whenever appropriate. Frederick County Public Schools embraces progressive discipline as a framework to respond to and resolve student discipline matters. Progressive discipline is designed to aid students in correcting their misconduct, and it encourages students to be responsible citizens of the school community.

Progressive discipline should promote positive student behavior, state unacceptable behavior, and establish clear and fair discipline responses for unacceptable behavior. Disciplinary responses are administered in proportion to the severity of the unacceptable behavior, its impact on the school environment, the student's age and grade level, the student's previous discipline history, and other relevant factors.

The school discipline process should include appropriate consideration of support processes to help students resolve issues that may be contributing to violations to the student code of conduct. These resources may include, but are not limited to, the student support team, positive behavioral supports, restorative practices, counseling with the school counselor, school social worker intervention, behavior, attendance and academic contracts and plans, peer mediation, and prevention programs (See FCPS Multi-Tiered Systems of Support).

Levels of Response

The FCPS Student Code of Conduct provides levels of response based on specific rule violations. Consequences can be tailored to address individual circumstances; therefore, the examples below may be listed in more than one level.



Levels of Progressive Discipline

Level 1: Documented Staff-Led Responses to Minor Behavior

Teacher Intervention/Response

These examples of documented responses by staff are designed to teach and motivate students to demonstrate appropriate behavior and provide appropriate accountability for behavioral infractions. Staff are encouraged to implement a variety of teaching and classroom management strategies and are not limited to these examples. When appropriate, staff may engage the student's support system to ensure successful learning and consistency of response, and change the conditions that contribute to the student's inappropriate or disruptive behavior. These responses should be used in a progressive fashion, as appropriate.

NOTE: Support staff must consult with the appropriate teacher or administrator to determine appropriate interventions/consequences. Bus drivers may assign a seat change without formal documentation.

- Verbal warning
- Parent contact
- Nonverbal cues for redirection
- Give clear and concise directions
- Modify expectation if accommodation is needed
- Revisit, clarify, and reinforce expectations/agreements
- Problem solving process
- Use positive reinforcement for expected behavior
- Reflection time and journaling (written or recorded)
- Classroom cool-down area
- Partner with another teacher for short-term reflection
- Restorative conversations
- Teacher/student conference
- Teacher/student/parent conference
- Teacher/student/counselor conference
- Teacher assigned and supervised detention
- Student choice of pre-selected consequences
- Teacher referral to alternative learning location

Level 2: Administrator Directed Supports/Responses to Major Behavior

Chronic minor behavior may result in an office referral for major behavior. A referral may be completed for chronic level one behavior that has not been successfully addressed by staff utilizing level one supports. These example responses below are designed to teach appropriate behavior so that students are respectful and can learn and contribute to a safe environment. Many of these responses engage the student's support system and are designed to alter conditions that contribute to the student's inappropriate or disruptive behavior. These responses aim to correct behavior by stressing its severity and acknowledging potential implications for future harm, while still keeping the student in school. These responses should be used in a progressive fashion.

NOTE: Support staff (non-certificated positions) must consult with the appropriate teacher or administrator to determine appropriate interventions/consequences.

Administrator Supports/Responses: Administrative action must be documented in the student information system.

- Warning
- Parent contact
- Revisit, clarify, and reinforce expectations/ agreements
- Give clear and concise directions
- Provide explicit instructions
- Modify expectation if accommodation is needed
- Use positive reinforcement for expected behavior
- Detention assigned/managed by Administrator
- Reflection time and journaling (written or recorded)
- Change seating with review of expectations
- Referral to counselor/behavior support
- Restorative conversation
- Referral to SST or 504/IEP Screening
- Administrator/teacher/student conference
- Create informal Behavior Support Plan (BSP) that addresses the function of student's behavior; create goal(s), and progress monitor
- Saturday School
- For students with IEPs: conduct Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA), and create a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)
- Identify adult mentor
- Provide reflection time followed by utilizing a problem solving process
- Assign reflection and corrective action plan (written or graphic representation)

Teacher Intervention/Support: Continued level one interventions and supports as appropriate. Interventions to support student needs should be documented.

Level 3: Administrator Directed Supports/Responses/Removal

These example responses engage the student's support system to ensure successful learning and to alter conditions that contribute to the student's inappropriate or disruptive behavior. These responses aim to correct behavior by stressing its severity and acknowledging potential implications for future harm, while still keeping the student in school. These responses may involve In-School Interventions (ISI) or In-School Suspensions (ISS). Such removals should be limited in duration as much as practicable without undermining its ability to adequately address the behavior. These responses should be used in a progressive fashion, as appropriate.

Administrator Supports/Responses/Removal: Administrative action must be documented in the student information system.

- Parent contact
- Review expectations
- Confiscate item(s) of disturbance for a limited amount of time and allow student to journal reflection on expectations and why item(s) was confiscated
- Written reflection using restorative questions
- Write or record an apology to everyone impacted by actions
- Use of cool down area/calming strategies
- Conflict resolution
- Detention assigned/managed by Administrator
- Temporary removal of school privileges
- In-school Intervention (Supervised Study)
- Provide opportunity for restitution
- Create informal Behavior Support Plan (BSP) that addresses the function of student's behavior, create goal(s), and progress monitor
- Assessment (FBA), and update or create a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)
- Assignment of school duty/job (student choice)
- Referral to counselor/behavior support/social worker
- Referral to SST/Screening
- For students with IEPs:conduct/review Functional Behavior
- Adult mentor assigned
- Check-in/check-out
- Temporary assignment out of class to an alternative learning location
- Restorative Conversation (trained staff and student(s))
- Administrator/teacher/student conference
- Behavioral contract
- Plan for re-entry after suspension

Teacher Intervention/Support: Continued level one interventions and supports as appropriate. Interventions to support student needs should be documented.

Level 4 - Level 5: Administrator Directed Supports/Responses/Out-of-School Removal or Superintendent Directed Supports/ Responses/Extended Out-of-School Removal

These example responses address serious behavior while keeping the student in school or in some situations remove a student from the school environment for an extended period of time due to patterns of inappropriate behavior which have persisted despite less intensive consequences, the severity of the behavior, and/or potential implications for future harm. These responses promote safety of the school community and an environment conducive to learning by addressing destructive and dangerous behavior and should be used in a progressive fashion.

Administrator Supports/Responses/Removal: Administrative action must be documented in the student information system.

- Parent meeting
- Out of school suspension
- Extended Suspension
- Expulsion
- Consult with Director of Student Services regarding Superintendent Transfer to Alternative Program
- Restitution
- Removal of school privileges until identified criteria is met
- Referral for therapy
- Community service plan/project
- Reflection paper/video
- Restorative Conversation (trained staff and student(s))
- Threat Assessment
- Assignment to another FCPS school or program
- For students with IEPs: conduct/review Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA), and update or create a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)
- Write or record an apology to everyone impacted by actions
- Plan for re-entry after suspension

Teacher Intervention/Support: Continued level one interventions and supports as appropriate. Interventions to support student needs should be documented.

Factors Impacting Behavior Intervention and Safety Decisions

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

1. The student’s age/developmental maturity. Generally, suspension and expulsion are prohibited in Grades PreK-2. ***Note: Under state law, there are heightened restrictions on the suspension and expulsion of PreK-2 students. Principals/designees must consult with the Supervisor of Mental Health and Psychological Services or designee to determine if there is an imminent threat of serious harm to other students or staff that cannot be reduced or eliminated through other interventions and supports.***
2. Previous serious behavior intervention infractions (including the nature of any prior misconduct, the number of prior instances of misconduct, and the progressive disciplinary measures implemented for such misconduct).
3. Cultural or linguistic factors that may provide context to understand student behavior.
4. The circumstances surrounding the incident.
5. Imminent threat of serious harm.
6. Other mitigating or aggravating circumstances, such as references to, or the inclusion of, hate language and/or the display of images and symbols that promote hate and can be reasonably expected to cause substantial disruption to school or district operations or activities. This prohibition will not be used, however, to prevent responsible discussion of such language, images, or symbols for educational purposes. Using language or displaying images and/or symbols that promote hate may be considered as a factor that elevates the level of disciplinary response to incidents such as, bullying, harassment, or intimidation.

School and Workplace Safety

The FCPS Board of Education acknowledges the extreme importance of safety and security in all locations and activities. Therefore, FCPS, in accordance with Maryland Law, has established a threat assessment and intervention process for students, staff, and other affiliated or non-affiliated individuals whose behaviors pose a threat to the safety of the school and work environment. FCPS utilizes a multi-disciplinary team of trained professionals, including, but not limited to, a school mental health professional, administrators, and school resource officer or local law enforcement to conduct assessments to evaluate the level of threat and recommend appropriate responses.

Search and Seizure

School administrators may make a reasonable search of a student (including, but not limited to: electronic devices, backpacks, purses, clothing) on school premises or during a school-sponsored trip if the searcher has a reasonable belief that the student has in their possession an item, the possession of which is: a criminal offense under the laws of this state, or a violation of any other state law or a rule or FCPS policy or regulation. All searches must be justified from their inception by a reasonable suspicion and the scope must be reasonably related to the circumstances which gave rise to it.

Searches must be made in the presence of an adult third-party of the same gender of the person being searched and searchers will avoid pat downs of intimate body parts. A reasonable effort will be made to contact a parent or guardian of the student as soon as practicable to provide information related to the reason for the search and its outcome. During school sponsored trips/functions in the absence of a principal or assistant principal, a trained principal’s designee may conduct a reasonable search under the same conditions that are required at school. Any student who refuses to cooperate with an authorized searcher is subject to disciplinary action, parent/guardian notification and law enforcement and the FCPS Office of Emergency Management involvement, if appropriate. School administrators reserve the right to take temporary possession of personal items that may be evidence in an investigation and revoke privileges associated with the misuse of personal items including electronic devices.

A principal or assistant principal may search FCPS property (including, but not limited to: buses, desks, lockers, school grounds). In addition, detection dogs (i.e. drug or explosives trained dogs) may be used on school property.

If an authorized searcher has a reasonable suspicion that a student has concealed an unlawful item in a vehicle parked on FCPS property or at property used during school sponsored events, law enforcement will be contacted. If law enforcement is unavailable, an authorized searcher may only search a student’s vehicle after the student or the owner of the vehicle consents. Student searches by law enforcement personnel on school premises must be conducted in accordance with established FCPS policies and regulations consistent with COMAR 13A.08.01.14D.

Ranges of Consequences for Violation of the Student Code of Conduct

Non-Suspension Consequences

FCPS staff work to help each student understand school rules and how their misconduct may affect others. When a minor violation of the Student Code of Conduct happens, there are a variety of responses that staff may enforce:

- Reteach desired behavior
- Restructure classroom practices based upon needs
- Address social skills and emotional skills that may contribute to behavior

- Private student redirection/warning and counseling by the teacher
- Counseling by another member of the staff
- Parent/teacher/administrator/student conference
- Change in seating
- Restorative practices or conference
- Behavior contract/chart
- After-school detention
- Lunch detention
- Temporary removal of privileges such as parking, senior privileges, teams, clubs, and other school-sponsored activities
- Temporary removal from class

Short and Long-Term Suspension

Principals may suspend a student for cause for not more than (10) school days (any student in the school who is under the direction of the principal in accordance with approved disciplinary guidelines). During suspension from school, the student may not participate in teams, clubs, and other school-sponsored activities, and should not be on any FCPS property.

When a student is suspended, the student or the student's parent or guardian shall promptly be given a conference with the principal and any other appropriate personnel during the suspension period.

At or before the conference, the student shall receive oral or written notice of the charges against him or her. If the student denies the charges, the student has the right to an explanation of the evidence supporting the charges and an opportunity to present the student's side of the story. A student whose presence in school poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process may be removed immediately from school, if the notice and conference required by this subsection is provided as soon as possible.

NOTE: In the case of students with disabilities, additional disciplinary procedures must be implemented in accordance with federal and state regulations.

Extended Suspension/Expulsion

Principals may recommend suspensions for more than 10 days to the Superintendent for chronic or very serious behavioral violations of the FCPS Student Code of Conduct. Upon the receipt of a written report from a principal requesting an extended suspension or expulsion, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall

promptly make a thorough investigation of the matter. Included in this investigation is a hearing with the student and their parent or guardian. If, after the investigation, the Superintendent or his/her designee finds that an extended suspension or an expulsion is warranted, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall promptly notify the parent or guardian in writing.

The Extended Suspension Process will be completed by the tenth school day of the initial suspension. If additional time is necessary to complete the process the student shall be allowed to return to school, unless the Superintendent or his/her designee determines that the student's return to school would pose an imminent threat of serious harm to other students or staff.

If the student is not allowed to return to school after the tenth day, the Superintendent or his/her designee will notify the student and the parent or guardian within 24 hours, provide the reasons for the delay in the process and the denial of reentry, and send a copy of the notice to the State Superintendent of Schools.

If, after the conference, the Superintendent or his/her designee finds that an extended suspension or expulsion is warranted, the student or the student's parent or guardian may appeal the decision to the FCPS Board of Education within 10 calendar days after the determination in accordance with FCPS Board Policy

Suspension and Expulsion of Students with Disabilities

Federal law sets forth the due process rights of students with disabilities who are recommended for suspension or expulsion. For additional information, please read the specific laws, policies, and regulations referenced within this document. Board policies and FCPS regulations are available at www.fcps.org/boe/policies.

Rights to Continued Access to Instruction

Absences from school due to suspensions are considered excused absences. Maryland law requires that students who are suspended or expelled be provided the opportunity to keep on track with classroom work, as is reasonably possible, as follows:

1. Each student suspended or expelled who is not placed in an alternative instructional program shall receive daily classwork and assignments from each teacher, which shall be reviewed and corrected by teachers on a weekly basis and returned to the student.
2. Each principal shall assign a school staff member to be the liaison between the teachers and the various students on out-of-school suspension or expulsion and to communicate weekly about classwork assignments and school related issues by phone or email with those out-of-school suspended/expelled students and their parents/guardians.
3. Students who are suspended will have the opportunity to complete the academic work they missed during the suspension period without penalty. Schools will provide all students who receive short-term suspensions and their parents/guardians with the contact information for a staff member who will be responsible for ensuring that this requirement is met. All other aspects of the process for a suspended student receiving missed assignments, completing missed assignments, and making up tests shall be identical with each school's established policy and practice for make-up work in the event of any other excused absence.

Parent/Guardian/Student Concern Process

If you have a concern or disagree with a decision made about your child's instruction, discipline, safety or other matters, FCPS is ready to work with you to resolve the issue. Usually, issues are most quickly resolved closest to the source of the concern. Therefore, we encourage the following sequence, starting with #1 and proceeding to the next level as necessary until your concern is satisfactorily resolved:

1. Your child's teacher or school counselor, as appropriate
2. School assistant principal or principal

3. Central Office School Administration and Instructional Leadership (SAIL) Director or the appropriate department supervisor if your concern is about a non-school matter such as transportation or food service
4. Chief of Schools or Chief Operating Officer
5. Deputy superintendent
6. Superintendent
7. Board of Education

The Superintendent and Board of Education will address unresolved issues only after they have been explored by the sequence of school personnel. When communicating by letter, fax or email, please send your correspondence only to the appropriate individual in the sequence. Please see Policy 105 and the Departments section of this website for contact information.

Student Behavior Intervention Matrix

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

- In choosing one or more interventions or behavior intervention for inappropriate or disruptive behavior, school staff should locate that behavior on the matrix. Possible infractions include, but are not limited to, cited examples.

- On the first instance of any inappropriate or disruptive behavior, school staff shall first consider one or more interventions or disciplinary responses from the lowest level indicated on the matrix for that behavior (or one or more interventions or disciplinary responses from a lower level).
- If the same behavior is repeated during the same school year, school staff should consider utilizing one or more interventions or disciplinary responses from the next highest level indicated on the matrix for that behavior, or any lower level.
- Staff is encouraged to implement several lower-level interventions before proceeding to higher levels that may involve disciplinary responses that remove the student from the classroom.
- If principals determine that there are unique or exceptional circumstances, or an imminent threat of serious harm.
- to students or staff, that warrant an intervention or disciplinary response at a level that is above the highest level or below the lowest level indicated on the matrix, principals must consult with the appropriate School Administration and Instructional Leadership (SAIL) Director and Director of Student Services prior to taking action.



FCPS Student Discipline Matrix

Lowest level consequences should be considered first, followed by progressively more intensive consequences based on severity, age and repetition of behavior

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Behaviors that Violate the FCPS Code of Conduct	Documented staff-led supports/responses to minor incidents, may include: written apology, student conference, parent/guardian contact, class restorative circle, referral to behavior support/school counselor, parent/guardian conference, reflection assignment, detention	Administrator-directed supports/responses, may include all Level 1 supports/responses, and: community service, conflict resolution/restorative practices, peer mediation, loss of privileges, temporary assignment to alternative learning location, detention, referral to community agency	Administrator-directed supports/responses/removal includes: restitution, mentoring program, Saturday School, removal from extracurricular activities, in-school intervention, bus suspension for bus incidents (up to 5 days)	Administrator-directed supports/responses/removal includes: in-school suspension, short-term suspension (up to 3 days) or long-term suspension (up to 10 days), bus suspension for bus incidents (more than 5 days)	Superintendent-directed supports/responses/removal includes: extended suspension, Superintendent transfer, or expulsion
				*Suspension codes indicated in parentheses below, align with the Maryland Student Records Systems Manual.	
Academic Dishonesty/Cheating	Academic dishonesty which can be addressed through developmentally appropriate teaching or staff-led consequences.	Academic dishonesty through cheating, copying, forging signature of teacher and/or parent/legal guardian, plagiarizing, altering records, or assisting another in such actions. (801)			
Alcohol		Possession, use or showing evidence of use, sale, or distribution of any alcoholic substances. (201)			
Arson/Fire		Attempting to, aiding in, or setting fire to a building or other school property. (501)			
Attack on Adult		Intentionally shoving, pushing, or otherwise being physically aggressive toward an employee of the school system or another adult in the context of a fight (e.g., body check; intentionally bumping; but not horseplay); intentionally engaging in a fight. This includes intentional physical contact with an adult who is intervening in a fight or other disruptive activity. (401)			
Attack on Student		Intentionally shoving, hitting, pushing, or otherwise being physically aggressive toward another student in the context of a fight (e.g., body check; intentionally bumping; but not horseplay); intentionally engaging in a fight. (402)			
Bullying/Harassment/Intimidation		Intentional conduct, including verbal, physical, or written or electronic communication that creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student's physical or psychological well-being and is: (1) motivated by an actual or perceived personal characteristic (including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender status, or physical or mental ability or disability); or (2) threatening or seriously intimidating. Conduct must occur on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus, or must substantially disrupt the orderly operation of a school. See FCPS regulation 400-48. (407)			
Bus Conduct	Minor bus conduct violation resulting in bus driver/school staff responses (warning, written parent notification, temporary seat assignment, etc.).	Student's behavior is in violation of the school bus expectations resulting in a written referral from the bus driver.			
Class Cutting		Failing to attend a class or school activity after arriving at school, without an excused reason. (101 - ISS Only)			

FCPS Student Discipline Matrix

Lowest level consequences should be considered first, followed by progressively more intensive consequences based on severity, age and repetition of behavior

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Destruction of Property	Engaging in behavior that unintentionally causes minor damage to property belonging to the school or others.	Damage, destruction, or defacement of property belonging to the school or others. See Destruction of School Property. (806)			
Detention Not Served	Failure to serve teacher-assigned detention	Failing to serve administrator-assigned detention.			
Dishonesty	Communicating information that is untrue, including falsely identifying oneself.	Communicating information that is untrue, including falsely identifying oneself. (701)			
Disrespect	Inappropriate comments or physical gestures to teachers, staff members, or others.	Making intentional and harmful gestures, verbal or written comments, or symbols to others (e.g., verbal put-downs, cursing, talking back); being insubordinate (repeatedly or persistently disrespectful; in defiance of authority). (701)			
Disruption	Students engage in low intensity, but inappropriate, disruption to learning.	Intentionally engaging in behavior that distracts from the learning environment (e.g., talking out of turn, throwing items, horseplay, sending incendiary texts/social media messages, disrupting a fire drill). (704)			
Dress Code Violation	Students wear clothing that is near, but not within, the county dress code policy.	Violating the school system's dress code. (706)			
Driving/Parking Violation	Minor driving/parking violation addressed by staff on duty.	Violating driving /parking expectations. (701)			

FCPS Student Discipline Matrix

Lowest level consequences should be considered first, followed by progressively more intensive consequences based on severity, age and repetition of behavior

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Drugs					
Controlled Substances		Possession, use or showing evidence of use, sale, or distribution of controlled dangerous substances including prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicines, look-alike drugs, and substances represented as controlled substances or drug paraphernalia (unless documentation is on file that student may self-carry). (203)			
Inhalants		Possession, use or showing evidence of use, sale, or distribution of any inhalants or other intoxicants. (202)			
Possesses or Uses Illegal Drugs (Students with Disabilities ONLY)		Illegal drugs are defined as a Controlled Substance but not to include a substance that is legally possessed, used under the supervision of a licensed health-care professional, or used under any authority of the Controlled Substance Act or under any other provision of federal law. (892)			
Sells or Solicits Sale of Controlled Substance (Students with Disabilities ONLY)		Controlled Substance means a drug or other substance identified under the schedules of controlled substances in 21 U.S.C. §812; 21 C.F.R. pt. 1308. (891)			
Explosives		Possession, sale, distribution, detonation or threat of detonation of an incendiary or explosive material or device, including firecrackers, smoke bombs, flares, or any combustible or explosive substance or articles, other than a firearm as defined by federal code (18 USC 921). (School should conduct a threat assessment.) (503)			
Extortion		Using a threat (without a weapon) to get a person to turn over property. (406)			
False Alarm/Bomb Threat		Initiating, by any means, a warning of a fire or other catastrophe without cause (such as pulling a fire alarm, misuse of 911, making a bomb threat, or threatening a school shooting). Discharging a fire extinguisher. (Should conduct a threat assessment when warranted.) (502)			
Fighting		Intentional mutual physical aggression in which both parties have contributed to the situation by verbal and/or physical action. (405)			
Foul Language/ Inappropriate Language/ Profanity	Using non-chronic and low intensity inappropriate language.	Delivering verbal or written messages that include swearing, name calling, or use of words in an inappropriate or offensive way. (701)			
Gang Affiliation Display	Student communicates affiliation with a gang using gesture, dress, and/or speech - but complies with staff direction to cease behavior.	Repeatedly communicates affiliation with a gang using gesture, dress, and/or speech. (701)			

FCPS Student Discipline Matrix

Lowest level consequences should be considered first, followed by progressively more intensive consequences based on severity, age and repetition of behavior

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Hateful Speech	Inappropriate/hateful terms/slurs that insult a person or a group based on ability, ethnicity, family structure, gender identity, gender expression, language, national origin, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.	Using inappropriate/hateful terms/slurs that are intended to insult a person or a group based on ability, ethnicity, family structure, gender identity, gender expression, language, national origin, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. (701) A bullying/harassment/intimidation form shall be completed if the violation is in accordance with FCPS regulation 400-48. NOTE: Incidents of hateful speech and actions should never be passively tolerated. When reports are made about the use of racial slurs or derogatory speech, immediate steps will be taken to investigate the incident, ensure the social emotional needs of students are met, and challenge any speech or actions that devalue, disrespect, misrepresent, or denigrate any person and/or group of people			
Hazing		For the purpose of initiation or acceptance into a student group or activity - any action taken or situation created that causes or is reasonably likely to cause harassment, physical, emotional, or mental harm, extreme embarrassment, ridicule, or loss of dignity. (704)			
Immunizations				Failure of the parent or guardian to abide by health regulations regarding immunization schedules, or failure to provide evidence of appropriate immunizations. (COMAR 10.06.04.03) (001)	
Inappropriate Display of Affection	Engaging in welcomed but inappropriate verbal and/or physical gestures/contact of a sexual nature and complies with staff direction to cease behavior.	Chronically engaging in welcomed but inappropriate verbal and/or physical gestures/contact of a sexual nature. (701)			
Inappropriate Use of Personal Electronics	Misuse of any electronic device which is carried, worn, or transported by a student to receive or communicate messages.	Chronic, disruptive, or inappropriate use of any electronic device which is carried, worn, or transported by a student to receive or communicate messages. See FCPS Regulation 400-18 (802)			
Leaving School without Authorization		Leaving school campus without following proper procedures. (701)			
Other	Engaging in minor behavior not otherwise defined. This behavior must be clearly described when reporting it.	Engaging in problem behavior not otherwise defined. This behavior must be clearly described in the discipline referral.			

FCPS Student Discipline Matrix

Lowest level consequences should be considered first, followed by progressively more intensive consequences based on severity, age and repetition of behavior

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Out of Assigned Area	Being in an area that is outside of an expected location, and complies with staff direction to return.	Being in an area that is outside of an expected location and refuses to follow staff directions. Chronic or repeated behavior of this kind.			
Personal Health				Conditions that present a clear and direct health risk to others. Examples: pertussis, active, untreated tuberculosis, or measles. Determination for exclusion is made by a health officer and carried out by the principal or other appropriate school official. (COMAR 10.06.01.06) (002)	
Physical Contact	Engaging in non-chronic inappropriate physical contact (ex. horseplay).	Engaging in actions involving physical contact (with body or objects) where unintentional injury may result. (704)			
Serious Bodily Injury				Intentionally misbehaving in a way that causes serious bodily injury (with or without intent to do so). Serious bodily injury is defined as: Causing bodily injury which involves (a) substantial risk of death; (b) extreme physical pain; (c) protracted and obvious disfigurement; or (d) protracted loss or impairment of a function of a bodily member, organ or mental faculty. (408)	
Sexual Activity				Engaging in inappropriate behavior of a sexual nature, including indecent exposure, consensual sex, inappropriate texts of a sexual nature, and other sexual activity not identified as sexual assault or harassment. Contact law enforcement when investigating photos or videos of a sexual nature. (603)	
Sexual Attack				Intentionally engaging in behavior towards a student or school system employee that is physically, sexually aggressive. (601)	
Sexual Harassment				Engaging in unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, other inappropriate verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, directed toward others. (602)	
Student/Student Conflict	Engaging in inappropriate confrontational behavior of a low intensity.	Engaging in inappropriate confrontational behavior of a high intensity (examples include: conflicts involving vulgar language, mutual threats, hostile argumentative exchange, physical contact).			
Suspension Alternative Not Completed				Failing to complete assigned Suspension alternative such as Saturday School, Restorative Conference, In-School Intervention, or substance abuse referral. (701)	

FCPS Student Discipline Matrix

Lowest level consequences should be considered first, followed by progressively more intensive consequences based on severity, age and repetition of behavior

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Tardy to Class	Arriving at class after the scheduled start of the class period.	Arriving excessively late to class or repeated tardiness to class without an approved reason. (102 - ISS Only)			
Tardy to School			Repeatedly arriving late to school, without an excused reason. (102 - ISS Only)		
Teasing/Taunting	Expressing disrespectful or school inappropriate messages (written, verbal, or gestural) to another person.	Same as Minor, but requiring administrative action due to intensity or chronic nature.			
Technology Violation	Minor or non-disruptive inappropriate use of electronic devices.	Engaging in the inappropriate use of technology as defined in the acceptable use regulation 400-73. (702)			
Theft			Taking or obtaining property of another without permission and/or knowledge of the owner. (803)		
Threat to Adult			Expressing orally, in writing (can be electronic), or by gestures the intent to do physical harm to an employee of the school system or another adult, when there is a nexus to school. Threat can be implicit or explicit. See Regulation 100-11. (403)		
Threat to Student			Expressing orally, in writing (can be electronic), or by gesture the intent to do physical harm to a student, when there is a nexus to school. Threats can be implicit or explicit. See Regulation 100-11. (404)		
Tobacco			Possession, use, sale, or distribution of tobacco products, products containing nicotine, nicotine replacement products, or vaping devices. (204)		
Trespassing			Unauthorized presence on school property, including while on suspension. See Annotated Code of MD § 26-102. (804)		
Truancy			Being absent from school for at least a half of a school day, without an excused reason. (103 - ISS Only)		
Unsafe Behavior	Any minor action/careless behavior that poses potential danger to self or others, not otherwise defined in other disciplinary offenses.	Any action that poses potential danger to self or others, not otherwise defined in other disciplinary offenses.			

FCPS Student Discipline Matrix

Lowest level consequences should be considered first, followed by progressively more intensive consequences based on severity, age and repetition of behavior

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Weapons					
Firearms					Possession of a firearm as defined in 18 USC 921 of the federal code. Examples include handguns, rifles, shotguns, and bombs. Refer to the federal code for the complete definition. Contact law enforcement for all incidents. Requires recommendation for expulsion for calendar year (exceptions may be considered by the Superintendent/designee). (301)
Other Guns			Possession of any gun, of any kind, loaded or unloaded, operable or inoperable. This may include any object that is a look-alike of a gun or firearm (e.g., B-B guns, pellet guns, water guns) unless it is approved as part of the curriculum or educational program (e.g., ROTC, band). (302)		
Other Weapons	Possession of any implement that the school administrative staff deems could cause, or is intended to cause, bodily injury/harm, other than a firearm or other gun. (School should conduct a threat assessment.) (303)				
Bring/Possess Weapon on School Property/ School Sponsored Act. (Students with Disabilities Only)			May include a weapon, device, instrument, material, or substance (animate or inanimate), that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury. Weapon does not include a pocket knife with a blade less than 2 1/2 inches in length. (See 18 U.S.C. §921; §930) (COMAR 13A.08.01.12-1) (School should conduct a threat assessment.) (893)		

Important Topics to Discuss with Your Child

This section covers topics that parents/guardians frequently ask about. These topics are intended to help you and your child have a better understanding of expectations for conduct that will contribute to a positive and rewarding learning experience.

Attendance

Parents are encouraged to notify the school on the day your child is absent. An absence for any portion of the day, for any reason, is presumed to be unlawful unless a note stating the reason is submitted and approved by the principal/designee within the same term of the absence. Students have the right to make up classwork missed and to have this work reviewed and evaluated by the teacher. Students have the responsibility to request and complete missed work within the term of the absence.

- Absences considered lawful and therefore excused, as described in the Public School Laws and Code of Bylaws of the Maryland State Board of Education, are:
Illness of the student (doctor's verification may be required)
- Death in the immediate family
- Court summons
- Hazardous weather condition
- Work or activity accepted by the school authorities
- Suspension
- Observance of religious holiday
- Lack of authorized transportation
- Health exclusion
- Other emergency (judgment of Superintendent or designee)
- State of Emergency

At the elementary level, unlawful absences in excess of 5 days in any 9-week grading period may result in an unsatisfactory mark in grades Kindergarten (K)-1 and a failing grade in grades 2-5 in the affected class(es). Unsatisfactory academic progress may result in non-promotion of a student. Prekindergarten (Pre-k) students are expected to attend school programs consistently. Excessive absences of a Pre-k student may result in withdrawal from a Pre-k program, unless otherwise prevented by law. This process also allows other students who are wait-listed to be considered for enrollment in the prekindergarten program. Further information is available in *Pre-Kindergarten Enrollment Regulation No. 400-9*

At the secondary (middle and high school) level, unlawful absences in excess of 5 days in any 9-week grading period may result in a failing grade in the affected class(es). A secondary student unlawfully absent in excess of 10 days for a semester course or in excess of 20 days for a year-long course may fail/lose credit in the affected class(es). Unsatisfactory academic progress may result in non-promotion of a student. A note from a doctor, dentist, court official or counselor may be required for all absences beyond 10 days.

High school students who are in danger of failing or who have failed/lost credit due to unlawful absences may earn days back with an approved plan by the principal.

A student is considered "absent" if the student is not physically present on school grounds or is participating in approved instruction or instruction-related activities at an approved off-grounds location for less than 10% of the school day. Information is also available in *Student Attendance Regulation No. 400-98*.

Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation

Children need a trusted adult to turn to when they feel bullied, harassed or intimidated. It is important that your child is encouraged to contact their school counselor, administrator or teacher to report bullying because it may not stop without help. If your child feels uncomfortable reporting bullying and harassing behaviors, parents are encouraged to report it to FCPS staff.

To report bullying, use the [FCPS bullying, harassment and intimidation online form](#)

If bullying happens outside of school, families can call:

- 211 for community resource information
- Law enforcement if threats or physical harm occur

Learn more about bullying, harassment, and intimidation in the FCPS Prevent Bullying brochure, found at www.fcps.org under STOP Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation. Information is also available in *Bullying – Harassment - Intimidation Complaint Process for Students Regulation No. 400-48*.

Bus Conduct

School bus safety is a shared responsibility that depends upon the cooperation of students, parents, drivers, and school officials. Bus transportation is an extension of the school day. FCPS will not tolerate students preventing drivers from doing their job or preventing other students from having safe transportation. Video cameras on buses record images and sound, enabling FCPS to document behavior that infringes on others. These cameras and recordings are kept secure by authorized FCPS personnel.

Safety Is Priority - Expected student conduct on FCPS operated or contracted buses are:

- Ride assigned bus only, unless written permission is provided by a school administrator to temporarily ride another bus.
- Follow the driver's instructions the first time they are given.
- Stay in your seat at all times.
- Keep hands, arms, feet, legs, and property inside the bus and to yourself, and keep your voice low.
- No eating, smoking, drinking, or vulgar language.
- Do not block the aisles or exits.
- Only those large items that can be held safely on your lap, placed on the window side of the seat beside you, or placed on the floor between your feet may be brought onto the bus. Items that are sharp-edged, glass, or subject to spillage are not allowed. Animals (except approved service animals), skateboards, and scooters are not permitted.

Students may use personal electronic devices on buses, in accordance with *Student Discipline Regulation No. 403-01* and *Electronic Devices – Student Use Regulation No. 400-18*

For more information, please see *Transportation Of Students Policy 441*, *Transportation Appeal Process Regulation No 200- 14*, and *Student Discipline Regulation No. 403-01*.

Cell Phones, Laptops, Tablets, Earbuds and Other Electronic Devices

FCPS is committed to assisting students and staff members in creating learning environments that provide access to digital learning opportunities that are age appropriate and safe. To support this initiative, with FCPS staff approval, students may use their FCPS provided devices during **approved** times within the classroom or other areas. FCPS is not responsible for loss or damage of electronic devices.

Electronic devices shall not be used to record, store, or transmit any type of image, sound, or video except for approved assignments with the express permission of school staff. School administrators reserve the right to take temporary possession of any device during an investigation and revoke privileges associated with the misuse of any electronic device. For more information, see FCPS Regulation 400-18 Electronic Devices.

FCPS Technology Devices

When students are required to use technology, FCPS provides the digital tools necessary. FCPS uses technological measures such as filtering to promote internet safety. Filtering limits students' ability to access harmful internet sites when using any device connected to the FCPS network, but only when this equipment is used in school on the FCPS network. Access through cellular networks does not provide the same measures of filtering. Students should only use the FCPS network (not private cellular service) for internet access while on FCPS property. Students (and others) should have no expectation of privacy when accessing FCPS networks.

Personal Electronic Device Guidelines

Students may use their electronic devices (including smart watches) before or after school in a non-disruptive manner. Electronic devices may only be used during lunch and between classes when authorized by a school administrator. They must be silenced and stored (out of sight) while in classrooms, the media center, the gymnasium, restrooms, and locker rooms for the entire school day, except for approved instructional or medical use, or an emergency. Personal earbuds/headsets may not be used during instructional time and shall not be worn when phone use is prohibited.

Digital Citizenship

The Board of Education is committed to responsible use of social media to facilitate community engagement, encourage collaborative communications, and enhance the education process. It is an expectation that employees and students are good digital citizens and use social media in a civil, respectful, and safety-conscious manner that is consistent with the school system's mission and does not infringe on the rights of others. To promote school safety, FCPS recommends: **Report It, Don't Repost It**. For details, see *Responsible Use of Social Media Policy 115* and *Responsible Use of Social Media Regulation No. 100-08*.

Digital citizenship refers to the responsible use of social media and other online tools. Staying safe on social media is just as important for students as it is for adults. We encourage parents and guardians to discuss with their child often the appropriate uses of digital tools, their safe use, and your expectation for how much time they are online each day. The following checklist of digital citizenship habits is a good tool for helping parents/ guardians talk with their child about how to be a good digital citizen as they begin to curate a positive and effective digital footprint:

- Discuss the importance of developing and maintaining a positive digital footprint and identity.
- Encourage a healthy balance of media use and well-being.
- Promote:
 - Think before you post.
 - Avoid oversharing.
 - Protect your privacy.
 - Allow parental access to all digital tools
 - Protect and change your passwords regularly.
 - Check where your information comes from.
- Discuss the dangers of cyberbullying, digital drama, and the use of Hate Speech.
- If your child does see something dangerous or threatening on social media, encourage them to **Report it, Don't Repost it**.
- Report illegal activity and poor behavior that makes school unsafe to a teacher, administrator, and the police.

Dress Code

FCPS respects students' right to express themselves in the way they select their personal attire. It is important, however, that, if their appearance disrupts the mission of the school system to provide a safe, productive and positive learning environment, FCPS staff may take disciplinary action in accordance with FCPS Regulation 403-01 Student Discipline.

Clothing and accessories should not:

- Be unduly revealing
- Promote illegal or violent conduct
- Display obscene, libelous, sexually-offensive, vulgar, or discriminatory words/language or images
- Display derogatory expressions or language demeaning an identifiable person or group, such as ability, appearance, culture, gender, home language, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or social class.
- Contain threats or gang symbols
- Conceal weapons or other illegal items such as drugs (outerwear jackets, etc.) and items that may be used as weapons (metal belts, chains attached to wallets/keys, etc.). Students may be asked to keep such items in their assigned locker.
- Include the wearing of headgear, except in the provisions detailed in Dress Code for Students Policy 439

Hateful Speech

It is expected that students refrain from using hateful speech/ slurs that insult an individual or a group based on ability, appearance, culture, gender, home language, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or social class. FCPS staff work hard to curb taunting and teasing by setting high expectations for students to interact in a positive and respectful manner, creating learning opportunities to raise both awareness and empathy about the harm done by the use of hateful speech/ slurs, and by addressing individual students who use this language in a school setting. It is expected that students report all incidents of hate speech to appropriate staff. Our message is “**Hate Has No Home in FCPS.**”

Medications/Treatments at School

Students are encouraged to take any needed medications outside of the school day. When medication must be administered during school hours, the parent/guardian must provide a written order from the student’s healthcare provider for all prescriptions and over-the-counter medications.

Medications must be transported by an adult and provided to school health staff in the pharmacy bottle, correctly and completely labeled. Over the counter medications must be in the original, unopened container. Medications sent in envelopes, plastic bags, or daily reminder containers cannot be administered. Students may bring and apply over-the-counter sunscreen without a written order.

All treatments require a written order from a healthcare provider. Please contact your school’s health room staff with any questions concerning the administration of medications and/or treatments.

Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty

It is expected that students only take credit for the work that is their own. Deliberately copying or using the direct work of others, including that of artificial intelligence large language models (LLM), such as ChatGPT, is considered academic dishonesty, cheating, plagiarism, or forgery. Students are prohibited from sharing work or discussing assessments with others, unless given permission by FCPS staff. As students use photos or other media online, they need to be aware of copyright law and the appropriate ways to use original work responsibly with fair use. When anyone uses someone else’s photo, video, music, or other original work from the internet, it is important that credit is given to the original creator of the material. Just like you would not want someone to use your hard work and claim it as their own, people who have material posted online deserve the same respect and recognition. Follow the guidance in this [video](#) when using material you find online.

LLMs are developed to use natural language processing to create humanlike conversational dialogue. These language models can respond to questions and compose various written content, including articles, social media posts, essays, code and emails. If and when a teacher authorizes the use of this type of application for students to create responses to assignments, the use of LLM technologies must be cited.

Public Displays of Affection and Sexual Misconduct

FCPS recognizes that genuine feelings of affection may exist between two students. However, students shall refrain from all Public Displays of Affection (PDA) while on campus or while

attending and/or participating in a school-related activity. Students are prohibited from taking actions such as unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Threats

FCPS is committed to promoting a culture of safety, wellness, and civility for students and staff, and fully complies with Maryland Law to ensure FCPS provides a safe and secure environment. To this end, FCPS takes all threats against students, staff, and property seriously. Students must refrain from making threatening statements, whether or not they have intent to harm. FCPS works closely with local law enforcement agencies to investigate all violent threats that are reported, administer appropriate school discipline, provide necessary and needed support for all who are involved, and seek criminal charges when appropriate.

We remind parents, guardians, and caregivers of the importance of having their child discuss all unsettling social media situations with a trusted adult. If they hear a rumor, they should discuss it with you, their school administrator, a trusted staff member, and/or the police. **Report it, do not repost it.** Under no circumstances will FCPS tolerate anyone creating a climate of fear and concern by threatening the well-being of our students, staff, and community, whether directly or through creating rumors about others. Together, students, parents/families and FCPS staff must work collaboratively to maintain safe and nurturing learning environments where our students can learn and grow.

We encourage all students and parents to review [Grace’s Law 2.0](#), which increases penalties for cyber assaults on victims 18 years and younger. The law carries a misdemeanor penalty of up to 10 years in prison or up to \$10,000 in fines.

If you have questions or need to report a threat, please contact the school’s administration, law enforcement, and/or use the [FCPS bullying, harassment and intimidation online form](#). In addition, you may report school-related threats online by visiting the Safe Schools Maryland Tip Line (www.safeschoolsmd.org) – a tool for proactively addressing harmful situations and helping students as needed.

FCPS Student Code of Conduct

Students who do not comply with these expected behaviors, as well as others not listed here, may receive disciplinary consequences in accordance with the FCPS Student Discipline Matrix located in the FCPS Parent Handbook and Student Code of Conduct.

Visitors to School

FCPS welcomes visitors to our schools. To limit interruptions and distractions to teaching and learning, and to maximize safety for all, visitors should be aware of the following procedures:

- All visitors are expected to enter a school building at the main entrance unless otherwise directed to enter another designated entrance for activities or special events.
- Visitors should push the call button located near the front door, look into the camera, and be prepared to state their name and purpose for visiting.

- Upon entering a school, visitors are expected to walk directly into the front office, be checked in and out by the front office staff using the visitor management system, and provide a valid I.D. upon request.
- A visitor's sticker will be given to visitors following the above procedures and must be worn and prominently visible while on school grounds.
- Any visitor, in the school or on the grounds while school is in session, that is unsupervised and/or without a visitor sticker, will be escorted by staff directly to the front office.

Anyone who is not currently a registered student or a staff member at the school, acting in a manner that disrupts or disturbs the normal educational functions or activities, may be considered trespassing. This includes entering a school building or grounds without reporting to the front office or entering school-sponsored events through an unauthorized entrance. Trespassers are subject to sanctions which may include no trespassing orders issued by a school administrator and/or law enforcement.

Media representatives must receive approval from a school administrator to interview, photograph, or videotape students before proceeding to the activity they are covering. A school administrator may limit or refuse visitor access to school property to ensure student or employee safety, confidentiality, or to minimize interruption.



Student Rights and Responsibilities

I. Basic Philosophy

- A. Students are individuals with rights guaranteed by the Bill of Rights and the due process amendment of the U.S. Constitution.
- B. The school is not a shelter from the law; students must obey local, state, and federal laws within the school.
- C. For every right, students should accept a related responsibility.
- D. Constitutional rights do not allow behavior which will create unhealthy or unsafe conditions within the school or disrupt the normal school process.
- E. Authority must exist for rights to be guaranteed. The control and supervision of the classroom rests with the teacher; the control and supervision of the building rests with the principal.
- F. The procedures developed to implement the items in the document will differ among the school communities in Frederick County.
- G. Assuring students their citizenship rights within schools will result in student understanding of the process as well as the content of our democratic society.
- H. A procedure is necessary to assure rights.
- I. This document is not intended to reduce the recognized legal rights of parents.

II. Implementation

- A. The Superintendent shall ensure that the document entitled *Student Rights and Responsibilities* is annually distributed to students and is available to the school community, administrators, staff and parents/guardians.
- B. The document shall apply to all students in Frederick County Public Schools. However, in view of recognized differences in maturity among students of different ages, procedures contained herein could not uniformly apply to all students.
 1. High School – The procedures should be fully implemented.
 2. Middle School – In view of the great and varying degree of change in students' maturation, flexibility in the application of procedures is needed. Effective instructional activities should precede any and all implementation.
 3. Elementary School – Students should be exposed to the general ideas in the document in instructional settings. They should be introduced to the concepts of responsibilities and rights within the society at large and in the school setting.
- C. The document and its implementation shall be reviewed periodically.

III. Due Process

Due process rights as they relate to student discipline are outlined in Regulation 400-04 "Suspension and Expulsion," online at www.fcps.org/policies.

Each secondary school shall establish a procedure for consideration of student grievances.

- A. A student grievance is an alleged violation of a provision of this document.
- B. The grievance procedure shall be developed with substantive student participation.
- C. Each school shall design a model for its review procedure. Suggested models are a panel of:
 1. Students, representative of the total school population;
 2. Faculty members chosen by the student body;
 3. Equal number of students, faculty, and parents selected by the student body;
 4. Equal number of students, faculty, and parents selected by the respective three groups.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

IV. Student Rights and Responsibilities

Rights	Responsibilities
A. Academic	A. Academic
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students have the right to attend school until graduation from high school or until age 21. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Suspension or expulsion can result from inappropriate behavior. b. Students have the right to appeal an extended suspension or expulsion. 2. Students have the right to be free of interference from other students. 3. Students have the right to programs designed to develop their abilities and talents. 4. Students have the right to be informed by the teacher of the specific objectives that are expected of the student before a unit of study begins. 5. Students have the right to be informed by the teacher what they must do to receive a particular grade before they begin a unit of study. 6. Students have the right to programs appropriate to their ability level in required courses of instruction. 7. Students have the right to ask reasonable questions at appropriate times concerning the school curriculum. 8. Students have the right to be assigned textbooks in good condition. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students have the responsibility to attend school regularly until age 18 and to follow local school regulations. 2. Students have the responsibility not to interfere with the education of other students. 3. Students have the responsibility to take advantage of the learning opportunities at the school and in the community. 4. Students have the responsibility to know the specific objectives that are expected of them before a unit of study begins. 5. Students have the responsibility to know what they must do to receive a particular grade before they begin a unit of study. 6. Students have the responsibility to consider professional judgment concerning their placement in required courses. 7. Students have the responsibility to consider reasonable answers to their questions concerning curriculum. 8. Students have the responsibility to return textbooks in good condition. If the textbook is not returned or is returned in a damaged condition beyond normal use expectancy, students will be informed of the replacement cost of the book.
B. Constitutional Rights	B. Constitutional Rights
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Non-Discrimination Students have the right not to be unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, physical or mental ability or disability. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Students have the right to report any type of discrimination to a school staff member immediately. b. Students have the right to counseling if subjected to any type of discrimination. c. Students have the right to be informed that FCPS has a regulation (400-48) that specifically outlines the procedures that must be followed when bullying, harassment or intimidation occur. 2. Rights of Expression – Student Publications <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Student publications are recognized forms of expression and are to be encouraged as learning experiences. As such, they shall have qualified faculty advisors. b. All members of the school shall have equal opportunity to contribute to school publications. 3. Rights of Expression – Non-school Publications Students have the right to distribute or display non-school literature subject to legal limitations and principal review. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Students have the right to expect the review to be done according to published guidelines. b. Students must receive approval or disapproval within three school days of the principal's receipt of material. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Non-Discrimination Students have the responsibility not to discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, physical or mental ability or disability. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Students have the responsibility to understand that any type of discrimination will be reported to a school staff member. b. Students have the responsibility to understand that counseling may be beneficial to victims of discrimination. c. Students have the responsibility to know school procedures for dealing with any type of discrimination. 2. Rights of Expression – Student Publications/Student Journalists <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Student publications must conform with standards consistent with the Canons of Journalism of the American Society of Newspaper Editors and Policy 436. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Student publications must work toward financial and editorial independence. (2) Students have the same responsibilities under the law as other persons concerning the matters of libel and obscenity. b. Editors of each student publication will create procedures whereby members of the school who are not on the staff may submit articles. 3. Rights of Expression – Non-school Publications Students must recognize that the principal has the legal right to prior review of any non-school publication they wish to distribute on school property. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The publication(s) should carry the name of the sponsoring organization or individual. b. The time and place for distribution will be cooperatively established with the principal to avoid disruption of normal educational activities. c. Students distributing literature will be responsible for removing litter resulting from their activities.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Rights	Responsibilities
B. Constitutional Rights (Continued)	B. Constitutional Rights (Continued)
<p>4. Right to Petition Students have the right to petition for redress of grievances.</p> <p>5. Patriotic and Religious Exercises a. Schools will provide a flag salute and other patriotic exercises, but shall not require participation in these exercises of any student who objects to them. b. Students shall not be required to participate in religious exercises of any kind.</p> <p>6. Right to Assemble Students have the right to organize and assemble.</p> <p>7. Dress and Symbolic Expression a. Students have the right to choose their manner of dress and grooming unless these present a "clear and present" danger to the student's health and safety, or interfere with class work or school order, or are in conflict with Board Policy 439 <i>Dress Code for Students</i>. b. Students may wear or display buttons, armbands, flags, decals, and badges of symbolic expression, unless the manner of expression interferes with the orderly process of the school or is legally libelous or obscene, or are in conflict with Board Policy 439 <i>Dress Code for Students</i>.</p> <p>8. Search and Seizure Students, their personal property, and the school property assigned to them shall not be subjected to unlawful search and seizure.</p> <p>9. Police Questioning on School Property Students have the right not to be questioned by police on school grounds except under the conditions stated in COMAR 13A.08.01.13 and FCPS Regulation 400-59.</p>	<p>4. Right to Petition The time and place for circulation of petitions will be cooperatively established between the petitioner(s) and the principal.</p> <p>5. Patriotic and Religious Exercises a. Students who decline to participate in patriotic exercises will respect the rights of participants. b. Students will acknowledge that materials with a religious theme may be used in educational studies.</p> <p>6. Right to Assemble The time, place, and purpose for student assemblage shall be arranged through procedures cooperatively developed by the administration, faculty, and students within each school.</p> <p>7. Dress and Symbolic Expression a. Students have the responsibility to dress and groom themselves in a manner that is safe, healthy, and non-disruptive of classroom and school procedures. b. Students have the responsibility to not wear or display buttons, armbands, flags, decals, and other badges of symbolic expression that disrupt the orderliness of the school or are legally libelous or obscene.</p> <p>8. Search and Seizure Students must recognize as legal the search and seizure practices described in the Public School Laws of Maryland, Section 7-308 and FCPS Regulation 400-59. a. Authority to search student (1) A principal, assistant principal, or school security guard of a public school may make a reasonable search of a student on the school premises or on a school-sponsored trip if there is a reasonable belief that the student is in possession of an item, the possession of which is a criminal offense under the laws of this state or a violation of any other state law or a rule or regulation of the county board. (2) The search shall be made in the presence of a third party. b. Authority to search school (1) A principal, assistant principal, or school security guard of a public school may make a search of the physical plant of the school and its appurtenances including the lockers of students. (2) The right of the school official to make a search of the locker shall be announced or published previously in the school. c. Rules and regulations The Maryland State Department of Education shall adopt rules and regulations relating to the searches permitted under this section.</p> <p>9. Police Questioning on School Property Students must recognize that questioning by police at school is lawful "concerning a crime committed on the premises or in connection with an investigation which if not immediately permitted would compromise the success of that investigation or endanger the lives or safety of the pupils or other persons, provided however, that a school official be present throughout that questioning."</p>
C. Student Involvement	C. Student Involvement
<p>1. School Policy and Curriculum a. Students shall be guaranteed a procedure that they have helped develop by which they may present their evaluations and suggestions of curriculum. b. Students shall have the right to participate in the development of school rules and regulations on conduct and disciplinary procedures. (These rules and regulations shall be published and given to all students.)</p>	<p>1. School Policy and Curriculum a. Students shall utilize to their fullest potential the agreed-to procedure for curriculum evaluation. b. Students shall abide by published school rules and regulations.</p>

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Rights	Responsibilities
C. Student Involvement (Continued)	C. Student Involvement (Continued)
<p>2. School Assemblies</p> <p>Students shall have the right to participate with the school staff in planning, implementing, and evaluating assembly programs.</p> <p>3. Student Government</p> <p>a. All students are entitled to adequate, responsible, and effective representation.</p> <p>b. Students shall have the opportunity for determining the organizational form through which their voice will be communicated.</p> <p>c. The duly constituted student government organization shall cooperate with the administration in selecting an advisor from the school professional staff.</p> <p>d. The student government shall have the right to meet regularly during the school day.</p> <p>4. Student Activities</p> <p>a. All students have the right to form and maintain organized groups in accordance with school system regulations.</p> <p>(1) The school must recognize any group organized in accordance with published procedures established cooperatively by the school administration, faculty and students.</p> <p>(2) Submission of a membership list may be a requirement for becoming or remaining recognized. However, information essential to holding a meeting during the school day shall be provided to the school administration.</p> <p>(3) An organization shall be banned after a full hearing if it has failed to abide by the terms under which it was approved, or because its activities present a clear threat to the health or safety of members of the school community.</p> <p>b. The administration shall seek recommendations for advisors of each organization from the students of the organization. The appointment of the advisor shall be made by the administration.</p> <p>c. With the principal's approval, the student groups will be allotted or allowed to raise the funds necessary to carry out their stated purposes, and will share in the control and disbursement of those funds.</p> <p>d. Student groups will have reasonable access to the use of school facilities and shall share in drawing up procedures for organizational use of school facilities.</p>	<p>2. School Assemblies</p> <p>Students attending assemblies shall respect the rights of others in attendance and those involved in the assembly program.</p> <p>3. Student Government</p> <p>a. Students will utilize duly constituted student governance organizational structures for involvement within the school.</p> <p>b. Students must provide a written statement defining the nature and role of the student governance organizational structure subject to the approval of the school administration.</p> <p>c. The student government shall consult and work with the appointed advisor.</p> <p>d. Regular meetings of the student government shall be at intervals cooperatively arranged with the principal and teachers.</p> <p>4. Student Activities</p> <p>a. The activities of organized student groups will contribute to the intellectual and social development of the students.</p> <p>(1) The group must submit to the principal a list of members designated as contacts, a constitution and bylaws or written statement of purpose, and report any changes in same.</p> <p>(2) Membership must be open to all students, except where the purpose of the activity requires qualifications which directly relate to the purpose of the organization.</p> <p>(3) The organization has the responsibility to adhere to its submitted purpose(s), and if banned for not so doing, shall respect and accept this decision until the time of the hearing.</p> <p>b. The students in each organization shall utilize and work with the appointed advisor.</p> <p>c. Student groups must assume responsibility for budgeting, recording, and justifying their expenditures according to procedures agreed upon by the administration, student advisors, and students.</p> <p>d. Students must cooperate with the administration and faculty in establishing and maintaining procedures that ensure the orderly use of school facilities based on a priority of requests and the needs of the total school community.</p>
D. Personal Counseling	D. Personal Counseling
<p>1. Students have the right to direct communication with counselors, teachers, and administrators.</p> <p>2. Students have the right to confidential communication with a counselor, teacher, or administrator concerning information to overcome drug abuse.</p> <p>3. No data intended for the students' cumulative record files may be collected from the students unless they have been informed as to the uses and known implications of the material being collected.</p> <p>4. Students must be informed as to the uses and known implications of standardized tests, and consent to the testing.</p>	<p>1. Students may confer with counselors, teachers, and administrators at times mutually agreeable.</p> <p>2. Students will recognize that communications with professional educators concerning information to overcome drug abuse are protected by 7-412, Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland.</p> <p>3. Students have the responsibility to cooperate with the reasonable collection of data.</p> <p>4. Students have the responsibility to cooperate with the reasonable collection of data.</p>

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Rights	Responsibilities
D. Personal Counseling (Continued)	D. Personal Counseling (Continued)
<p>5. The school must record only the information specified in the Maryland Student Records System Manual of Instructions and handle the types of information in the following manner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Students' permanent record files shall contain only personal, family, attendance, and subject performance information. b. A student file, to be destroyed by the time the student is age 21, shall be maintained which includes standardized test, school enrollment, non-subject performance and physical health information. c. Confidential information, such as psychological and physical evaluations, must be kept in locked files accessible only to the principal and those designated by him/her. <p>6. Students and their parents have the right to an interpretation of the data contained in the students' files by professionally trained personnel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Intelligence quotient data and psychological reports shall be excepted. These may be withheld from the students (though not their parents if the students are minors or unemancipated) at the discretion of the school authority in collaboration with the parent or guardian. b. The records and files may not be disclosed to any person or agency outside the school except in case of a court order or with the parents'/guardians' written permission. If the student has attained 18 years of age or is attending an institution of post-secondary education, the student's written permission rather than the parents'/guardians' written permission is required. COMAR 13A.08.02 shall control the release and disposition of records. <p>7. Eligible students have the right to apply for special programs for disabled students. (COMAR 13A.05.01)</p>	<p>5. Students must recognize that specific information must be kept in school records.</p> <p>6. Students have the responsibility to obtain permission for the release of information contained in their files to outside agencies.</p> <p>7. Non-applicable</p>



