COLLINGSWOOD AND OAKLYN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Restorative Practices Code of Conduct Guide

School Community Expectations

2026-2027

Overarching Goals:

- Solidify expectations of CPS and OPS community members (staff, students, families)
- Reimagine current practices and behavioral responses with a restorative lens
- Maximize the time students are in class
- Utilize Restorative Practices to resolve conflicts between students, staff, and families
- Limit exclusionary discipline to extreme circumstances in which safety is compromised

Source: BSD Restorative Code of Conduct (Modified)

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Restorative Practices Code of Conduct

Part I: Responsibilities and Expectations of CPS & OPS Staff, Families, and Community Members

Respectful Communication: All CPS and OPS community members deserve a safe, welcoming, inclusive environment and will act respectfully toward students, staff members, and families at all times (in and out of school, online) with the goals of building relationships, preventing or repairing harm, and addressing root causes of conflict. Our shared humanity and dignity must be protected and honored, and especially in times of heightened stress or emotion. We will refrain from the use of shouting, insulting, threatening, or humiliating others.

Engage in Restorative Conversations: Conflicts may result in invitations to facilitate restorative conversations. For restorative systems to work, all members of our CPS and OPS school community must be willing to engage in restorative responses in the classroom and at the school level. While participation in a restorative process is voluntary, we are all encouraged to be open to repair and to provide a pathway back to our community. Restorative processes are an investment of time for the good of our school community. Facilitators of restorative conversations serve as neutral parties charged with helping participants honestly explore their responsibility in conflict and repair.

Expectations of CPS & OPS Staff, Families, Board Members, and Superintendent
All members of the CPS and OPS community (including staff, students, building administrators, families, the superintendent, and the school board) are expected to

- Respect all members of the school community.
- Model respectful behavior.
- Build relationships with one another.
- Communicate as openly, honestly, and transparently as possible.
- Uphold and support a safe, equitable learning environment.
- Exercise and practice self-awareness.
- Practice accountability when harm is caused.
- Support the academic success of all students.

It is the responsibility of the school board to

- Hire and supervise the superintendent.
- Develop, approve, and monitor district policies, including governance policy and school district goals. (Policy 5600M: Student Code of Conduct/Restorative Practices)
- Demonstrate equitable leadership by showing that they are inclusive, informed, accountable, strong, and flexible communicators; are transparent and present; and have a restorative mindset. (Policy 2100: Anti-Racism & Equity)
- Monitor the fiscal health of the district.

It is the responsibility of the superintendent to

- Implement the policies of the school board, and develop and implement procedures aligned to policies.
- Facilitate the co-construction and implementation of the district strategic plan.
- Be accountable to the school board, as well as all staff, students, and families in their schools.
- Demonstrate equitable leadership that is inclusive, informed, accountable, and transparent, with a restorative mindset.

It is the responsibility of building administrators to

- Carry out the district strategic plan
- Develop and implement a vision for their school with their school community
- Be accountable to all staff, students, and families in their school
- Ensure a safe and equitable learning environment for all students in their school
- Develop relationships with students' families.
- Demonstrate equitable leadership by showing that they are inclusive, informed, accountable, strong, and flexible communicators, are transparent and present, and have a restorative mindset.
- Help build a positive school community

It is the responsibility of school staff to

- Provide a safe, equitable, and developmentally appropriate learning environment for all students in their school.
- Teach acceptance and mutual respect for others in their school.
- Support students to grow and learn and to become responsible global citizens.
- Develop relationships with student families in their school.
- Demonstrate equitable leadership by showing that they are inclusive, informed, accountable, strong, and flexible communicators, are transparent and present, and have a restorative mindset.
- Help build a positive school community

It is the responsibility of students to

- Exercise and practice self-awareness.
- Understand and follow school expectations, including the Restorative Code of Conduct Guide and the Student Handbook.
- Behave in a manner that focuses on academic success.
- Be responsible and accountable for meeting school expectations.
- Help build a positive school community

It is the responsibility of families and members of the school community to

- Emphasize the importance of being prepared to learn.
- Support students in respecting the rights of others and strive to meet the expectations of the school community.
- Recognize and understand that school personnel will hold all students accountable in a restorative manner.
- Respect, understand, and support the policies of the school district.

Part II: Classroom-Handled Behaviors

These are behaviors that should be addressed within the classroom. If the behavior becomes repeated, increases in frequency/duration, or becomes so disruptive that learning cannot take place for other students, teachers/staff should request support from the school's administration, counseling, or behavioral support staff. One of these individuals can check in with the student to help them re-enter ready to learn or escort the student to an alternative space.

Non-Office Referral - Classroom-handled Behaviors
not following classroom expectations
task avoidance
disrespect
borrowing without asking
excessive talking or noise-making
left class early with permission and were out for longer than 15 minutes
checking phone and putting it away, cellphone/ smartwatch usage
not completing work or work refusal
provoking others
minor emotional outbursts
not following directions
refusing to participate in class activities
sleeping in class
off task
truancy and/or tardiness
unprepared (i.e. computer not charged, lack of pencil, etc.)
minorly offensive language, comments, or gestures (such as "This is stupid/boring.", etc.)
swearing that is not directed toward any particular person
talking out of turn/calling out/blurting out
littering
unkind words or gestures
teasing or taunting a peer
minor physical contact (i.e. play fighting, accidental bumps)
lunch/recess conflicts (non-physical)
bathroom misbehaviors
brief physical outburst that does not put self/others in harm's way
misuse/ improper use of materials
destruction of classroom materials
running between spaces
minor damage to classroom materials/items
not returning items to appropriate places
inappropriate internet usage

How to Handle Classroom Behaviors:

- Be proactive: Co-construct classroom agreements, get to know each student's interests, strengths, and weaknesses, connect with families before any calls to discuss behavior, model communication, and recognize and celebrate student success.
- Utilize mindfulness tools that build social-emotional skills. (Additional activities)
- Utilize calm directives that clearly state expectations (Establish the success criteria that are

known and understood by all students)
- Constructive and specific feedback (Practice giving and receiving feedback that is grounded in respectful discussion about individual feelings and needs)
- Re-teaching or rehearsal of expectations that the student isn't meeting
- Increased opportunity to respond during instruction
- Increased teacher proximity
- Verbal prompts or quick corrections, reminders, and redirection

After the Moment Responses in the Classroom:
- Use of restorative questions
- "Reset pass" to walk or visit with a trusted adult in the building (not unsupervised and for a set amount of time)
- Restorative Conference
- Have a restorative conversation with the student
- Behavior check-out system for the classroom to provide students with an opportunity to reflect with you on daily behavior
- Reflection activity (Not a worksheet, but an actual reflection task done with the teacher during independent learning activities for other students)

Responses After Class Ends:
- Learning Pathway (see Educational Opportunities section below for more details)
- Peer Mediation
- Review of academic struggles and asset-based academic support planning with the entire teaching/support team
- Review of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) in conjunction with academic accommodations and modifications
- Brainstorming session with administrator, behavior support staff, special educator, school counselor, etc. to brainstorm a list of other potential responses and ideas to support struggling students
- Collaborate with MTSS Coach or Instructional Supervisor to monitor and observe student-teacher interactions and provide feedback

Responses Involving Families:
- Restorative Family Conversation (family hears from teacher/staff before administrator becomes involved)

Note: Whenever possible, the first call home should always be a positive and warm introduction before any calls made about behavior challenges; this is why school staff must begin developing relationships with families at the beginning of the year. (Tips for Phone Calls Home)

Part III: Behaviors that May Require Out-of-Class Support

While the behaviors listed below may warrant being sent out of class, these are not behaviors that automatically rise to the level of suspension. If a student is sent out of class, then an office referral must be written to document the behavior and lost instructional time. After a student is sent out of class, they should have access to missed work while they are away and have a restorative welcome back into the classroom when they return.

Office Referral
constant continuous disruptions of learning
repeated refusal to follow directions that causes a disruption
running away or hiding from staff
escalation after prompts or redirections
chronic targeted, bully-like behavior toward peer
repeated work refusal
teasing/taunting a student who belongs to a protected category
repeated or directed profanity/swearing at staff or peer
threatening body language/posturing
profane language, disrespect directed at a specific person
physical contact directed at another person (moderate to severe)
repeated threats directed at another person (moderate to severe)
harmful gossiping after being asked to stop
possible bullying (including online)
intentional humiliation of peer or staff
violation of the school's cell phone policy
cheating/plagiarism
possible harassment

Counseling Services Referral - Tracked via attendance codes in Genesis
habitually skipping class
leaving class every day for a prolonged period
leaving class early with permission but not returning

Part IV: Non-suspendable Behaviors, Alternatives to Suspension, and Educational Opportunities

Non-suspendable: These behaviors do not rise to the level of suspension because they do not represent a pressing and imminent threat to the physical safety of students, staff, or others at a school site. We want to keep students in the school community and must approach handling behavior differently to do so. This may mean having in-school alternative placements and/or a modified learning schedule/environment as an option while an alternative to suspension is put into place.

The following behaviors do not qualify as suspendable behaviors; instead, alternatives to suspension should be offered in place of exclusionary discipline. Examples of alternatives to suspension are provided. Parents/guardians will be notified of these behaviors and the planned response.

Undocumented Suspensions: Undocumented suspensions are prohibited and unlawful. Students cannot be removed from class for more than ¼ of a full school day or be sent home before the end of the school day without the administrator following the suspension protocol; this includes a student leaving to take the rest of the day at home.

Behavior	Definition/Description	Possible Alternatives to Suspension (decided upon with student)
Truancy, Tardiness or Absence	Unexcused missing all or part of a class or school day	● "Call back time" before school or after school to make up missed academic work ● If repeated behavior, determine if appropriate services are being provided
Dress Code Violation	Wearing an item that violates the school dress code, or not wearing an item(s) required by the dress code	● Learning pathway
Swearing	Use of profanities, vulgar phrases	● Research report on language history and its power ● Write an apology letter or offer a direct verbal apology
Skipping Class/ Hiding from staff/Running away off campus and unable to return safely (K-8)/Leaving campus when not permitted to do so (high school)	Not attending required class(es)	● "Call back time" before school or after school to make up missed academic work ● An adult family member, older student mentor, or school staff member will "shadow" the student ● Meeting with students, staff, and support systems to create a plan for re-engagement ● Special Education consultation ● Mentorship from an older student ● (for secondary students) Go to an elementary school to mentor and/or provide community service

Tobacco use	Possession of tobacco products, being caught smoking or vaping on school grounds	Required: parent contact; meet with Student Assistance Coordinator (SAC), school nurse, or school counselor, etc ● Substance abuse counseling referral ● Substance Abuse harm circle ● Follow up with SAC ● Leverage collaborative relationships with area substance abuse providers to make referrals ● Family conference ● Learning pathway ● Other options as determined by the Principal or designee Repeat Offenses may result in escalated consequences including, but not limited to, suspension.

Marijuana and/or alcohol use or possession	Possession of marijuana or alcohol on school grounds	Required: parent contact; meet with Student Assistance Coordinator (SAC), school nurse, or school counselor, etc ● Substance abuse counseling referral ● Referred to the school nurse for evaluation and referred to SAC for follow-up ● Leverage collaborative relationships with area substance abuse providers to make referrals ● Family conference ● Learning pathway
Minor physical contact	Mutual contact (such as shoving) resulting in no or minor injuries (such as a scrape) or instigating a physical altercation. A minor incident where the impacted parties are willing to engage in repair and unlikely to repeat the behaviors. Consideration should be given based on the disruptive impact on the school community.	Required: Parent contact, conflict resolution learning pathway, informal resolution between two students OR safety plan ● Written assignment reflecting on behavior and how to make better choices ● Roleplaying/written assignment of how the situation could have been handled without physical violence ● Peace circle ● Parent conference ● Allow students to resolve conflict and sign an agreement saying that “this is where it ends”

Defiance/Lack of cooperation	Refusal to comply with repeated adult requests or directions, which does not pose a direct physical safety threat to students, staff, or the individual	• Conference, circle, or mediation with the teacher • Signed compact on how students and staff will handle the situation in the future • Role-playing how the situation could have been handled • An adult family member, coach, or community member will "shadow" (must have background check per District policy).
Misuse of classroom materials	Using materials for a non-intended purpose (throwing paper, markers, etc.)	• Make modifications that take into account known student triggers of problem behavior
Verbal altercation	Getting into heated arguments or shouting with students or staff members that may or may not involve profanities. Does not involve the use of slurs.	• Mediation • Restorative Conference
Wandering halls	Not going to assigned class or alternate space. Wandering that does not pose a threat to themselves, other students, or staff.	• Learning pathway on how missing class and school negatively impact the school community • Community meeting to determine unmet needs
Minor vandalism	Harming property in such a way that it can be repaired but causes inconvenience or disturbance	• "Positive" art project to beautify school • Fixing damaged property

Behavior support staff, MTSS staff, counseling staff, and afterschool staff can all help building administrators brainstorm alternative options to challenging behaviors.

The following list represents options for responses to challenging behaviors. These are not in sequential order. It is not mandatory to use the suggested options; they are offered as a resource. In consultation with student support staff and school administration, they should be tailored to the behavior and individual(s) involved.

Additional Alternatives to Suspension:

- Academic support plan
- Family member or staff "shadows"
- Behavior contract
- Behavior support plan
- Buddy/Breather room
- Change of schedule
- Community service (as an outcome of a restorative conference and when agreed upon by the student and matched to behavioral action)
- Convene IEP/504 meeting
- Counseling
- Daily progress report
- Direct teaching and practice of functionally equivalent replacement behavior
- Home-School behavior contract
- Learning pathway

- Make modifications that take into account known student triggers of problematic behavior
- Mediation
- Mental health check
- Mentoring
- Parent consultation
- Positive peer reporting
- Problem-solving conference
- Referral to substance abuse counseling and attendance
- Restorative conversation
- Review IEP/504
- School→←home note system
- SEL learning block
- Student Support Team (SST)
- Written Reflective Process
- Ban of Extracurricular Activities (BACCA)

Educational Opportunities: When a student or staff member engages in harmful behavior, educational opportunities may be provided to learn from the behavior and prevent it from occurring again in the future. The educational opportunity will be tailored to the context of the harm and the desired learning outcomes. Two examples of these, learning pathways and impact panels, are described below.

Learning Pathway: A Learning Pathway is an individual learning environment where the person who caused the harm is offered the opportunity to learn more about the topic of the harmful behavior. Learning pathways are designed for students or staff to reflect on their actions through learning about history and context and ultimately exploring accountability. As part of the learning process, participants are asked to discuss challenging topics, take in informational content, and make decisions about how they would like to demonstrate evidence of their learning. The goal of the process is education and possible mindset shifts. (Ex: Student Mini-Lessons)

Students can be required to engage in a learning pathway to reflect on the harm done as an alternative or addition to a traditional restorative process. Sometimes a learning pathway may be required as part of reentry meetings.

Staff can also have learning pathways as a way to repair the harm they may have caused students or colleagues. Staff learning pathways are opt-in.

Impact Panel or Video: Another educational option is an impact panel. This is where a group of individuals with experience around a certain harmful topic serve on an impact panel to share with the person who has done the harm the impact of their behavior. These need to be organized with extreme care for the individuals serving on the panel to ensure harm is not caused to them. (An alternative to an impact panel is an impact video in which individuals with experience of a harmful topic share in a video statement how this impacts them; the individual who engaged in the harmful behavior could watch the video as part of a Learning Pathway.

Part V: Behaviors that May Warrant Suspension

Suspension is a last resort because it often excludes students from their learning and has been disproportionately used for historically marginalized student groups, LGTBQIA+ students, students with limited English proficiency, and students with learning differences. As a result, we have approved an Anti-Racism & Equity district policy requiring we address these disparities. Therefore, suspension may only be considered when there is an egregious safety concern or when school staff have exhausted and documented all other forms of intervention/alternatives.

Restorative Exit and Re-Entry: For the few situations in which a suspension must be utilized, there should be a restorative exit for the individual to understand why they are being separated from the school community, how they'll be supported while they are out, and a plan for a restorative reentry

upon their return. When a student is suspended, they must still have access to educational opportunities and materials as part of a suspension plan. If a student has an IEP or 504 Plan, the case manager must be included in the suspension planning process. A student who has been suspended can re-enter school following a restorative re-entry meeting that must include the student, parents/guardians (or designated trusted adult), and school representatives. This in-person/virtual meeting should be scheduled at a time/place that allows for parent/guardian participation.

Behavior	**Definition/Description**	**Rationale for Suspension**
Weapon or firearms possession	Incident where a student knowingly possesses a firearm or an item intended to be perceived as a firearm (e.g., airsoft, BB, or pellet gun), or a weapon designed to cause major harm (e.g., large knife, pipe bomb). Devices confiscated that are against school policy (e.g. airsoft, slingshot, etc.) Illegal confiscated devices or products shall not be returned.	N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1 et seq. (Causes for suspension, expulsion of pupils.) N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.8 et seq (Special Education discipline/ suspension/ expulsion.) N.J.S.A. 6A:16-5.5; 6.1 et seq. (Policies and procedures for alcohol, drugs, weapons, and safety. Policy 5611: Firearm Offenses Policy 5613: Weapons Offenses
Drug possession with intent to sell and/or distribute	Student is found with a substantial quantity of illegal drugs and drug-selling paraphernalia (e.g., baggies, scales). Illegal confiscated devices or products shall not be returned.	N.J.S.A. 6A:16-7.1 et seq; 6A:16-8.1 et seq. (Student code of conduct, Intervention, and referral services) Policy 5530: Substance Abuse
School Threat or Non-compliance during a School Threat	Someone who poses an immediate danger to persons or property or a significant threat of disrupting the academic process.	N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1 et seq. (Causes for suspension, expulsion of pupils.)
Non-compliance during a School Threat	Someone who fails to comply with emergency procedures during drills or when someone poses an immediate danger to persons or property or a significant threat of disrupting the academic process.	N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1 et seq. (Causes for suspension, expulsion of pupils.)
Tampering with safety equipment	Causing a false safety alarm (such as yelling “shooter”, “bomb”, or “fire”, pulling the fire alarm, tampering with a defibrillator or smoke detector, etc.).	N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1 et seq. (Causes for suspension, expulsion of pupils.)
Physical Assault	At a minimum, one individual receives *substantial* physical injuries as a result of the incident, barring self-defense in extreme situations. Students cannot reach de-escalation to address the fight, and the physical safety of others is therefore compromised. May require immediate intervention by medical or police personnel.	N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1 et seq. (Causes for suspension, expulsion of pupils.) N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.8 et seq (Special Education discipline/suspension/ expulsion. N.J.S.A. 6A:16-5.5; 6.1 et seq.

Sex-based harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking	Unwanted physical contact that is sexual in nature between two or more individuals. May require immediate intervention by medical or police personnel.	Possibly Title IX depending on the incident Policy 5751: Sexual Harassment
Refusal to allow a search	Refusing to allow authorized school personnel to search an individual and/or their possessions (e.g., bag, backpack).	T.L.O., 469 U.S. at 341-42 (Reasonable suspicion for school safety concerns.) N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1 et seq. (Causes for suspension, expulsion of pupils.)
HIB: Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying	Any incident that may be harassment, intimidation, or bullying needs to be investigated per HIB requirements. See HIB Policy and Procedures for more specific information. Note: Suspension as an option in HIB incidents should be done on a case-by-case basis. These cases should only warrant suspension when there is evidence that the student(s) do not feel safe at school. Alternatives could be switching classes and teams, shadowing the student who caused harm, etc.	N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1 et seq. (Causes for suspension, expulsion of pupils.) N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15.3
Lewd and lascivious conduct	Sexual activity that goes beyond kissing and/or light physical contact. Can be consensual.	N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1 et seq. (Causes for suspension, expulsion of pupils.)
Habitual or repeated offenses	Continued or repeated infractions despite multiple attempts to provide restorative options.	N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1 et seq. (Causes for suspension, expulsion of pupils.)

Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB): Harassment, intimidation, or bullying means any gesture, any written, verbal, or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents that is reasonably perceived as being motivated by either any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability; or by any other distinguishing characteristic; and that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds, as provided for in N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15.3, that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other pupils; and that:

- A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a pupil or damaging the pupil's property, or placing a pupil in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or
- Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any pupil or group of pupils; or
  Creates a hostile educational environment for the pupil by interfering with a pupil's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the pupil.

The New Jersey Department of Education and Collingswood and Oaklyn School District policy guides our work around any incident that may be harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying. Every

school has a designated employee tasked with the intake of every report suspected of being HIB and following through with the life of a case. The goal of our HIB work is to keep students safe and able to access their education. In cases of HIB, a restorative option can be utilized following an investigation in conjunction with supportive measures identified through the investigation. A suspension may be necessary in a HIB case if the behavior is so severe that the safety of the student(s) and/or staff is compromised. Please see the district HIB website for more information.

Appendix A: History and Context of Code of Conduct Guide Creation

The **Restorative Code of Conduct** began in 2022, with multiple board members, staff members, and students discussing the need for change during the 2022-2023 school year to update disciplinary practices that apply to all students, staff, employees, parents, and family members.

The CPS Board of Education revised and approved Policy 2100: Anti-Racism & Equity in October 2023, and Policy 5600: Student Code of Conduct/ Restorative Practices in May 2024. The OPS Board of Education's corresponding policies are under review. The Restorative Code of Conduct Guide was developed and distributed to Elementary and Secondary Equity Councils to provide their members an opportunity to provide comments and suggestions. Student and staff focus groups will be held during the first year of implementation to solicit feedback on the Restorative Code of Conduct Guide and will be used to make necessary revisions in the future.

The Restorative Code of Conduct Guide is purposefully designed to not solely apply to students but instead to all community members as we believe in CPS that we all must be accountable for our actions and behavior.

Annual student engagement data consistently shows disparities in suspensions and disciplinary data that adversely affect students of color, LGBTQIA+ students, students with IEPs, students who are English language learners, and students who qualify for free and/or reduced lunch. Students who are suspended are at increased risk of academic failure, dropping out of school, and entering the criminal justice system.

We are working to transform our district into being truly restorative. The New Jersey Office of Civil Rights organized an Interagency Task Force and released the NJ Youth Bias Report in October 2020 entitled, An Anti-Bias Vision for the Next Generation. The report outlines protections against discrimination and other state laws requiring that students be afforded equal educational opportunities. The report argues that New Jersey must take meaningful steps to eliminate racial disparities in school discipline through educator professional development and reducing schools' reliance on exclusionary disciplinary practices.

The Restorative Code of Conduct Guide directly aligns with the strategic goal of Student Life of the VISION 2026 Strategic Plan; Student Life is focused on increasing opportunities for student influence on school climate, culture, and overall school life. The Restorative Code of Conduct also aligns with the strategic goal of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) of the VISION 2026 Strategic Plan; focused on furthering the advancement of inclusive concepts into district culture, dismantling negative stereotypes, and building cultural competence of teachers and administrators.