

#SCHENECTADYRISING



**2025 - 2026  
DISTRICT CODE OF CHARACTER,  
CONDUCT, AND SUPPORT**





# 2025-2026 Code of Character, Conduct, & Support

The Schenectady City School District **Code of Character, Conduct, & Support** is designed to promote equity and strongly supports our principles and efforts to be trauma-sensitive and culturally responsive, as well as to present a strong focus on restorative practices.

In addition to outlining guiding principles, rights, responsibilities and various types of consequences, this document serves to provide a preventative approach and therapeutic response as we aim to keep students in the classroom and out of the juvenile justice system.

In the Schenectady City School District, we approach student behaviors as teachable moments and opportunities for learning instead of punishment. While it is important that we hold students accountable for their actions, consequences without re-teaching and reflection do little to change behavior in the long run. To improve educational outcomes for our students, we must provide interventions and behavior supports that are directed at addressing academic gaps and the root causes of misbehavior. We know that suspension does not improve outcomes for students.

In this document, we outline and describe practices and alternative pathways that are diagnostic and prescriptive, such as diversion. This alternative pathway provides an opportunity for mental and behavioral health treatment, and potentially reduces the amount of time a student is out of school.

Our **Code of Character, Conduct, and Support** also emphasizes the importance of implementing strategies, practices, interventions and plans that address students' needs before behavior issues rise to a most serious level. Students are most likely to make positive decisions when they understand the expectations, know that adults care about them and when they feel respected.

Please read the **Code of Character, Conduct, and Support** in its entirety. It should be used as a guide and reference throughout the upcoming school year.

Our top priorities are to ensure that our schools are safe, that all students have what they need to be academically successful, and that race, ethnicity, economics, and disability are never predictors of student achievement.

We are partners in the education of our students. Together we can ensure that every student is academically successful and on the path to graduation.

If you have any questions, concerns, or comments, please contact us through Let's Talk.

## 2025-2026 BOARD OF EDUCATION

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# VISION

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## Vision:

Schenectady City Schools will be a continually improving school district dedicated to excellence in teaching and learning, equity, engagement, and efficiency.

## Goals:

- To build a school community that supports students' success, and which is characterized by creative demonstrated leadership, challenging suitable up-to-date curricula, innovative, varied and engaging methods of teaching and learning, strong community partnerships, and a safe, healthy and supportive climate.
- To build a culture based on high expectations, respect, and accountability for performance.
- To communicate effectively with all district stakeholders.

## Slogan:

Everybody Counts. Everybody Learns.

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## OUR PILLARS

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### STUDENT & GRADUATE SUCCESS

We serve so that all students graduate ready to achieve their college, career, and life aspirations through equitable access to programs, resources, and high-quality instruction.

We nurture the whole child and listen to student voices so that students and graduates have a sense of pride and belonging.

Students and graduates demonstrate kindness, cultural competence, and respect for diversity and each other.



### PASSIONATE PEOPLE

We engage and retain passionate, dedicated people who continuously learn and improve as guardians of equity and advocates for our students' success.

Our team represents the diversity of our community.

We deliver and receive excellent customer service.



### PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES & COMMUNITY

We highly value our families and the community; we welcome and invite collaboration and partnership.

Communication is inclusive, accessible, goes two-ways, and is always based on high expectations within a supportive environment.



### EFFICIENT SYSTEMS & EQUITABLE RESOURCES

We engage stakeholders to develop and improve inclusive systems and procedures.

People know who to go to, for what, and receive a timely and fair response.

We allocate resources to promote equitable access and outcomes for all.

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**EVERYBODY COUNTS. EVERYBODY LEARNS.**

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# INTRODUCTION

## WHY DO WE HAVE A CODE OF CHARACTER, CONDUCT, AND SUPPORT?

The goal of the Schenectady City School District's **Code of Character, Conduct, and Support** is to outline expectations which are aimed to ensure that all students receive an education in a safe, engaging, and caring environment. For our schools to be safe and supportive environments, everyone within the school community must demonstrate and offer mutual respect and cooperation.

The **Code of Character, Conduct, and Support** serves as a guide to good citizenship, promoting positive behavior and helping students understand expectations which are based on the principles of mutual respect, citizenship, character, acceptance, honesty, and integrity. Students are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate and civil manner, with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students, school personnel and other members of the school community as well as for the care of school facilities and equipment.

The Board of Education recognizes the need to clearly define expectations for acceptable conduct and identify the potential responses to unacceptable conduct. Levels of behavior concerns, violations and responses, interventions and consequences are outlined in the **Code of Character, Conduct, and Support**.

The **Code of Character, Conduct, and Support** applies to all students while in Schenectady City School District schools and on school grounds, in school vehicles, at school-related and district-sponsored activities including those held at locations off school property. It also applies to actions that occur outside of school hours and off school property when behavior can negatively affect the educational process or endangers the health, safety, morals, or welfare of the school community.

The Schenectady City School District **Code of Character, Conduct, and Support** serves to ensure that students have equitable access to behavioral support and interventions.

## ACCESS AND FEEDBACK

- There is a 30-day public comment period during which time staff, students, parents, guardians, caregivers, and community members can provide comments and feedback.
- A public hearing is held prior to the Board of Education approval.
- Copies of the **Code of Character, Conduct, and Support** are made available at the beginning of the school year.
- All faculty and staff are provided with the **Code of Character, Conduct, & Support**.
- The **Code of Character, Conduct, and Support** is posted on the district website in multiple languages.
- A committee of employee stakeholders convenes to obtain feedback, review relevant data & discuss necessary changes to the **Code of Character, Conduct, and Support** each year.

# BELIEFS ABOUT STUDENTS, LEARNING, & OUR WORK

All of our students must be assured that they will be treated in a fair, consistent, and non-discriminatory manner. We must ensure that all students have what they need to be academically successful.

- Equity is the main pillar of our work.
- All children can achieve their personal best and can improve behavior with guidance, instruction, support, and coaching.
- Students are best approached through a trauma informed lens. For example, they should not be asked, “What is wrong with you?” They should instead be asked, “What has happened to you?”
- Students need varying kinds and amounts of time, attention, and supports to succeed academically and achieve at high levels.
- According to the National Institute of Justice, “Out-of-school suspension does **not** improve outcomes for students.” Students are more likely to make positive decisions when:
  - They understand the positive behaviors that are expected of them
  - They feel that staff members care about them and will help them learn and grow
  - They feel respected
  - All staff consistently use best practices
  - All staff provide positive feedback for appropriate behavior and effort



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Schenectady City School District **Code of Character, Conduct, and Support** is based on key principles for ensuring that our schools are safe, healthy, and supportive environments.

## All adults have an obligation to help students learn to be good citizens by:

- Helping students learn right from wrong
- Fostering a desire to make good decisions
- Encouraging them to take responsibility for their actions and words
- Modeling behaviors that we want to cultivate

Policies and practices must be implemented in ways that are consistent, fair, and respectful. Adults are expected to protect the dignity of every student and ensure a tone of decency, compassion, and respect.

Improving educational outcomes for all students requires that schools provide support, and that behavior support is directed at addressing academic learning gaps, lagging skills, and the causes of misbehavior. Prevention and intervention strategies may include more personalized instruction, support services, and programming to address personal and family circumstances and social-emotional learning. Examples of strategies include conflict resolution, academic intervention, tutoring, peer mediation, anger management, positive behavior strategies, circles, and other restorative and therapeutic interventions.

School personnel are responsible for developing and using strategies that promote learning and positive behavior in school, and for addressing behaviors which disrupt learning.

Administrators, teachers, counselors, social workers, psychologists, other school staff, and parents/guardians are expected to engage students in intervention and prevention strategies that address behavioral issues. These should be discussed with the student and parents, guardians, & caregivers through the School-Based Support Team (SBST).

**The School-Based Support Team (SBST)** is a problem-solving team that supports student social-emotional, and academic need. A referral can be made to the SBST by a parent/guardian, staff member or administrator by contacting the School Psychologist.

## THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

School Psychologists are valuable resources to solve problems and provide knowledge and recommendations through the Committee on Special Education, Section 504 and the SBST. Each school in our district has at least one School Psychologist who collaborates with colleagues, administration, and families to support student growth. School Psychologists are responsible for psycho-educational evaluations as a tool to make instructional and behavioral recommendations on a case-by-case basis. They are clinically trained professionals who support school staff in exploring best practice solutions for overcoming barriers in the classroom. They are skilled at working to help promote academic engagement, positive behaviors, and social-emotional skills.

## OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS

Other related service-providers who can provide valuable expertise and resources for the SBST include school counselors, social workers, speech therapists, physical and occupational therapists, and our psychiatric nurse practitioner.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES: RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

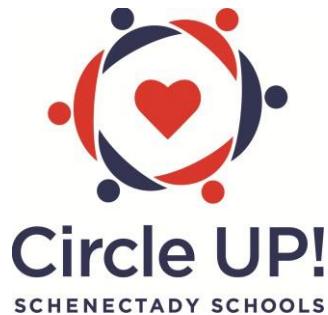
## RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Student discipline, policies, and practices must be implemented in ways that are accountable and restorative. Students and families need to know that the school will provide interventions inside and outside the classroom that support a restorative, rather than punitive, response. Students have the option to accept assigned consequences and fully participate in the interventions designed to address specific behaviors. **These interventions require students to own the problem, reflect on the impact of their behavior on themselves and others, understand why the behavior was unacceptable or inappropriate, and identify what they can do differently next time, as well as to repair harm.**

We need to be aware that the person whose actions we are attempting to correct must be in a safe place where they can admit they were wrong and want to make amends or alter their behavior.

As an administrative team we are trying to use the common language when discussing discipline referrals with students:

- What is the problem?
- Who is being impacted by the problem?
- Use of “I” statements
- What is it like when the problem does not exist?
- How do we get there?



**Restorative Practice Specialists work throughout the district to build capacity in this area. Here is a [Link](#) to their full menu of services.**

### **Examples of Restorative Practices**

**Affective Statements** refers to the tone in which we speak to students to help us build relationships and show that we care about the students. For example, “I like the way you worked for the whole class period today,” is more effective than just saying “good job.”

**Classroom Circles** can be used as a response to poor choices and as a vehicle for discussion when creating respect and classroom norms. This should be used in the beginning of the school year so that students understand expectations and a positive classroom culture can be developed.

**Restorative Conference** is a formal response to conflict where the facilitator helps both parties explore what happened and who was affected. This can be done with a facilitator, teacher, and a student after a disruption to the learning environment has occurred.

**Restorative Reflections** is an exercise in which students complete a writing assignment and go through the restorative questions and steps as they try to reflect on their actions and make a better plan.

**Restorative Harm Repair Circles** are full-scale circles involving students, parents (guardians or caregivers), advocates and those affected. This is appropriate with students who acknowledge they have done harm and want to repair the relationship.

**Conflict Coaching sessions** are one-on-one meetings between individual parties and a trained restorative practice specialist. These sessions help the party gain perspective on the conflict, make decisions about next steps, as well as learn key communication skills, all while exploring position, emotions, needs and power in their conflicts.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## PARENTS, GUARDIANS AND CAREGIVERS AS PARTNERS

Students, parents, guardians, caregivers, and school personnel all have a role in making school a safe learning environment and must cooperate with one another to achieve this goal. School staff should ensure that parents, guardians, or caregivers are informed of their child's behavior and enlisted as partners in reinforcing positive behavior and addressing areas in need of growth. Parents, guardians, and caregivers are encouraged to discuss any concerns or history that may affect student behavior and discuss any known effective strategies with their child's teacher and other school staff. Open communication is essential, and parents, guardians, and caregivers are the experts on their children.

## EQUITY

Student discipline, policies and practices must be implemented in ways that are fair, equitable, & differentiated according to need. All students must be treated fairly without favor toward or prejudice against any one group of students according to ability, age, gender, disability, race, ethnic group, socioeconomic status, religious or spiritual orientation or indigenous heritage.

## TRAUMA SENSITIVITY

Awareness and intervention are essential when behaviors may be symptomatic of more serious problems that students are experiencing. It is important that school personnel be sensitive to issues that may influence the behavior of students and respond in a manner that is most supportive of their needs. Appropriate disciplinary responses should emphasize prevention and effective intervention, prevent disruption to learning and promote a positive school culture.

## SENSORY SPACE/ROOM

A special room or space, therapeutic in nature, that is designated to engage a person's senses usually through special or soft lighting, music, objects, and manipulatives. It is designed as a safe place for students to retreat to avoid anticipated behavior escalation. Sensory spaces promote self-organization and positive change. They are typically used as a preventative strategy.

## TURN-AROUND SPACE/ROOM

A designated place where a student goes in response to a behavior or multiple behaviors to de-escalate, where they can discuss what happened, take responsibility for it and work to better understand why it happened. Highly skilled staff work with the student to problem-solve so it won't happen again and to develop pro-social skills.

## PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

Each SCSD school is expected to promote a positive school climate and culture that provides students with supports so that they can grow both academically and socially. Schools take a proactive role in nurturing students' pro-social behavior by providing a range of positive behavioral supports as well as meaningful opportunities for social-emotional learning. Effective social-emotional learning helps students develop fundamental life skills. Examples include implementing a social emotional curriculum, classroom guidance lessons, and a variety of social skills groups.

## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Engagement is integral to creating a positive school climate and culture that effectively fosters academic achievement and social-emotional growth. Providing students with multiple opportunities to participate in pro-social activities and develop a bond with caring, supportive adults, positively influences behavior. A few examples include providing students with opportunities to share ideas and concerns and to participate in school-wide initiatives such as PBIS (Positive Behavior in Schools), Circle Up, or No Place for Hate. Student attendance and engagement specialists work across the district to assist in the removal of school attendance barriers and increased engagement.

# RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of the school community must assume a responsible role in promoting behavior that enhances academic and social success. Courteous, respectful, and responsible behavior fosters a positive climate and one that promotes learning.

## STUDENTS

- Students learn best when adults serve as positive role models.
- Students learn best when there is unconditional acceptance of differences.
- Students learn best when respect and civility are modeled by all.
- Students learn best when behavioral expectations are clearly defined and consistently implemented.

All students are guaranteed the right to respectfully express opinions, support causes, organize and assemble to discuss issues and demonstrate peacefully and responsibly, in support of, and in accordance with the policies and procedures established by the Schenectady City School District Board of Education.

### Students have the right to:

- A sound, quality education in a school environment that is safe, orderly and promotes learning.
- Be respected as an individual, treated fairly and with dignity by other students and school staff.
- Organize, promote, and participate in student activities and clubs as part of the formal education process or as authorized by the school principal.
- Dress in such a way to express one's personality if it does not distract or disrupt the learning environment. (See dress code on page 46)
- Provide representation of appropriate school-wide committees that influence the educational process as designated by school personnel.
- Participate and express opinions through the publication of school newspapers, social media, and newsletters with oversight from faculty advisors.
- Exercise freedom of inquiry and expression, written and oral, within appropriate limits under the law and provided that the rights of others are not diminished.
- Be protected from intimidation, harassment or discrimination based on (actual or perceived) race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion or religious practice, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability, by employees and students on school property or at any school-sponsored activity.



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# RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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## Students have the responsibility of:

- Owning and being active participants in their learning.
- Attending school daily, arriving on time, and being prepared for learning.
- Being truthful about and accountable for words and actions.
- Respecting themselves and others in class, on school grounds, on buses and at any school-related activity.
- Respecting the rights and feelings of fellow students, parents, guardians, or caregivers, school staff, visitors, and guests.
- Knowing and complying with school district rules, expectations, and policies.
- Trying to correct and improve behavior through restorative interventions.
- Expressing thoughts and opinions in ways that are polite, respectful, and courteous.
- Respecting others' personal space.
- Participating in learning communities, including helping to formulate rules and procedures in the school, engaging in school-related activities and fostering a culture of respect for learning and for others.
- Seeking help and assistance when needed.
- Taking care of property that belongs to others or the school.
- Helping to make school a community that is free from violence, intimidation, bullying, harassment, and discrimination.

## PARENTS, GUARDIANS AND CAREGIVERS

Parents, guardians, and caregivers have the right to be active participants in the learning process, to express their views and to provide input into decisions that affect their children. They are vital to the success of students in school. Parents, guardians, and caregivers should have high expectations for their children.

## Parents, guardians, and caregivers have the right to:

- Be actively involved in their children's education.
- Be treated courteously, fairly, and respectfully by all school staff.
- Receive timely information about policies and procedures that relate to their children.
- Receive regular reports from school staff regarding academic progress and behavior.
- Receive notification and information of inappropriate or disruptive behaviors by their children and of any disciplinary actions.
- Receive information about due process procedures for disciplinary matters concerning their children.
- Receive information about ways to improve their child's progress including counseling, tutoring, after-school programs, academic programs, and mental health services.
- Receive information about services for Students with Disabilities.
- Receive information about services for Multilingual Learners (MLL).
- Be contacted when their child is believed to have committed a crime or when police are called.
- Receive communication through provided translators.

# RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents, guardians, and caregivers have the responsibility of:

- Providing updated contact information to the Schenectady City School District Student Registration Office and their child's school.
- Making sure that their children attend school regularly and on time.
- Letting the school know when and why children are absent. (See page 19 for school contact info)
  - [Who to Call](#)
- Telling school officials about any concerns or complaints.
- Supporting their children by providing an environment suitable for homework and developing good study habits.
- Working with school staff to address any academic or behavioral struggles their children may be facing.
- Talking with their children about expectations and behavior.
- Teaching and modeling respect.
- Advocating for their children and taking an active role in the school community.
- Attending meetings and monitoring their child's grades and progress.
- Being respectful and courteous to staff, other parents, guardians, caregivers, and students while on school premises.
- Teaching children that all children have the right to attend school and be treated with respect and dignity regardless of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender/gender identity or sex.

Schools will ensure that parents, guardians, and caregivers have a right to participate in decision-making that affects school policies and procedures including:

- Informing them in a timely and clear manner as to when and how they can participate and to ensure that all parents, guardians, and caregivers have equitable access to information and opportunities for participation.
- Ensuring they have opportunities to make recommendations to the school about effective methods for participation (ex. surveys, events, newsletters, & Let's Talk).
- Giving them opportunities to provide input, receive information, and help guide decision-making.

Schools will ensure that parents, guardians, and caregivers have the right to participate in decisions that affect their child's education including:

- The identification of academic or behavioral challenges as soon as possible and working to identify solutions.
- Participation in restorative solutions to problems or conflicts.
- Protection of due process rights as related to school discipline.

# RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## EDUCATORS

**Principals, educators, and all school staff have the right to:**

- Work in a safe and orderly environment.
- Be treated courteously, fairly, and respectfully by students, parents, guardians, caregivers, and other school staff.
- Communicate concerns, suggestions, and complaints.
- Receive supportive professional development and training.
- Receive necessary resources.

**Educators have the responsibility of:**

- Fostering and nurturing so that students develop as learners, both academically and socially.
- Recognizing that children should be subject to behavior management, support and discipline policies **appropriate with their ages and levels of understanding.**
- Being respectful and courteous to students, parents, guardians, and caregivers.
- Serving as role models for students.
- Cooperating and scheduling conferences with students, parents, guardians, caregivers, and others, in an effort to understand and resolve academic and behavioral concerns.
- Making every effort to accommodate families whose work schedules, access to transportation or distance from school, limits their ability to meet or participate.
- Keeping families informed of their student's progress, challenges, effort, and achievements in a timely manner.
- Encouraging students to participate in classroom, extracurricular and other school-related activities.
- Knowing and reenforcing expectations, policies, and procedures consistently, fairly, and equitably with the support & collaboration of their administrators.
- Confronting issues of discrimination and harassment in any situation that threatens the emotional, physical health or safety of any students, employees, or anyone on school property or at a school function and reporting incidents of discrimination and harassment to the attention of their teacher, counselor, administrator, staff member or the Dignity Act Coordinator.
- Striving to meet students where they are and provide equitable supports based on their needs.



# RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## PRINCIPALS

### Principals have the responsibility of:

- Promoting a safe, respectful, supportive, and orderly school environment for all school community members, regardless of (actual or perceived) race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex.
- Reviewing the code of character, conduct & support, and procedures for reporting incidents with all staff at the beginning of each school year.
- Ensuring all staff participate in mandated yearly training such as The Dignity for All Students Act (DASA), School & Workplace Violence Prevention, Child Abuse Mandated Reporter training, and Mental Health.
- Maintaining confidentiality and respecting student and parents (guardians/caregivers) rights to privacy.
- Developing the capacity of staff, students, and families to intervene regarding behavioral concerns.
- Ensuring equity and that all students and staff are treated fairly.
- Partnering with parents, guardians, and caregivers through the facilitation of the SBST process.
- Leading the implementation of the strategies and protocols in the Student Attendance Guide.
- Treating students, staff, & families courteously, fairly, and respectfully.

## SUPERINTENDENT

### The Superintendent has the responsibility of:

- Promoting a safe, respectful, supportive, and orderly environment for all school community members, regardless of (actual or perceived) race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex.
- Reviewing the policies of the board of education and state and federal laws relating to school operations and management, with all district administrators.
- Working with district administrators to enforce the code of character, conduct, & support and ensuring that all incidents are resolved promptly, and that students and staff are treated fairly and equitably.
- Addressing issues of discrimination, harassment or any situation that threatens the emotional or physical health or safety of any student, employee, or person on school property or at a school function.



# RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

### Members of the Board of Education have the responsibility of:

- Promoting a safe, respectful, supportive, and orderly school environment for all school community members, regardless of (actual or perceived) race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex.
- Approving the **Schenectady City School District Code of Character, Conduct, and Support** annually.
- Working with the Superintendent to address issues of discrimination, harassment or any situation that threatens the emotional or physical health or safety of any student, school employee or person who is lawfully on school property.
- Ensuring that policies promote and ensure equity.
- Ensuring that race, ethnicity, economics, and disability do not predict student achievement.
- Treating students, staff, and families courteously, fairly, and respectfully.

## DISMANTLING THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

The school-to-prison pipeline is the disproportionate tendency of minors to become incarcerated due to increasingly harsh school and municipal policies (such as zero-tolerance).

Adopting a responsive approach to discipline keeps students in the classroom and out of the juvenile justice system. This requires a shift in mindset. The Schenectady City School District Code of Character, Conduct, & Support is designed to help guide where disciplinary practices can become more responsive.

Strategies should include:

- Adopting a social emotional & trauma informed lens.
- Knowing students and developing cultural competency.
- Planning and delivering effective student-centered instruction.
- Moving the paradigm from punishment to skill development.
- Resisting the criminalization of school behavior.
- Engaging in restorative practices.
- Creating school wide systems aimed to promote positive school climate & culture.
- Holding students accountable by explicitly teaching them coping, communication, and conflict resolution skills.

District-wide responsive discipline policies are critical to stopping the school-to-prison pipeline. When **SCHOOL DISTRICT PERSONNEL** become agents for change, they support teachers, counselors, and building level administrators, & all staff to make these shifts.

**TEACHERS** have the most face-to-face contact with students and a front-line opportunity to interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline. Instructional practices, classroom management, and an emphasis on restorative practices and social emotional learning, can keep kids in class.

From locating wrap-around services to understanding and uncovering issues that adversely affect students in the classroom, **COUNSELORS** are equipped to interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline through their work with both teachers and students.

# GUIDE TO DISMANTLING THE PIPELINE

## Examples...

### VERBAL DISRESPECT

Student is defiant and uses inappropriate language when verbally directed.

#### ADULT RESPONSES TO AVOID

- Communication that we are personally offended.
- Emotional replies that focus on re-asserting adult authority over the student.
- Responses that conflate the student's disrespectful behavior with their personal identity and character traits. For example, "You're disrespectful" or "That's another example of you making a bad choice."
- Referral for disciplinary action by another adult.

#### RECOMMENDED ADULT RESPONSES

- Nonverbal communication that we won't let anything the student says in anger, cause us to be emotionally reactive toward them. For example, mindful breathing to model self-awareness and non-judgment.
- Offering even-tempered and predictable expressions of patience and respect. For example, using empathetic listening and offering choice – "You're telling me that was really upsetting." (You can use X strategy or Y strategy as an in-class break to help yourself cool down.)
- Making a mental note about the situation that is so triggering for the student and committing to invest in relationship-building. For example, using topics of interest, humor, affection (if or when appropriate) with the student at times when they are more emotionally regulated.
- Taking actions that demonstrate sensitivity to and plans for addressing those issues in the future. For example, adjusting seating arrangements to prevent conflict with same peer in the future; pre-setting students about expectations for discussion around an emotionally provocative topic; planning 1:1 conference time to collaboratively problem-solve with the student and demonstrate that we may have somehow been part of the problem in the situation and hope we can be part of the solution through our respect for and interest in the student's point of view.

### TRUANCY

Student is frequently absent from or tardy to their first period class and is failing.

#### ADULT RESPONSES TO AVOID

- Verbal and nonverbal communication (privately or publicly) of our judgment that the student's tardiness represents a character flaw.
- Actions that demonstrate zero tolerance or bring undue attention to a student's falling short of our expectations. For example, when we refuse to admit a late student into class.
- Giving up on action planning to support the student. For example, failing to offer opportunities to make up missed work.

#### RECOMMENDED ADULT RESPONSES

- Verbal and/or nonverbal communication (privately and/or publicly) of our belief that we all do well when we can, and that there are lots of reasons people might have a problem with lateness. Reiterate that the school is invested in student success & can provide support.
- Actions that demonstrate a restorative approach that involves limit-setting and a desire to help remove barriers, while encouraging high expectations around attending school & respectfully sharing the importance of being physically present for their growth & learning success. For example, Insistence on check-ins or conferences with the student to collaboratively problem-solve and focus on why their attendance matters, paired with high encouragement and nurturing. Consistent expressions of empathy for the student and faith that together we can work toward personal growth and both attendance and academic improvements.
- Committing to ongoing work on the home-school partnership and school-wide efforts at reducing barriers to school attendance and achievement, with recognition that these problems may often represent manifestations of social injustice and everyday hassles that SCSD student and families have disproportionately been faced with navigating over multiple generations.

# DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT

New York State's Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) took effect on July 1, 2012. The law seeks to provide the state's public-school students with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, school buses and/or at school functions.

No student shall be subjected to harassment by employees or students on school property or at any school Function, nor shall any student be subject to discrimination based on a person's actual or perceived:

- Race
- Color
- Weight
- National Origin
- Ethnic Group
- Religion
- Religious Practice
- Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender (defined to include gender identity or expression)



Each school & the district have designated dignity act coordinators who are trained to address issues in areas protected by the law and is accessible to the community.

**Parents (guardians/caregivers) who feel that their child has been bullied should contact their child's principal** who will coordinate with the school's DASA coordinator to investigate. More information about DASA, including the DASA complaint form, can be found on the district website

<https://schenectadycsny.sites.thrillshare.com/page/dignity-for-students-act-dasa> . Questions may be directed to the Office of Student Support Services at 518-881-3412 or through Let's Talk.

- The district will act promptly to investigate all complaints and will take appropriate action to protect individuals from further discrimination, harassment, bullying, and retaliation.
- Any student who believes that they have been subjected to discrimination, harassment, bullying or retaliatory conduct, as well as any individuals who are aware of or have knowledge of this behavior, should immediately report it to any staff member or administrator. They may also reach out to the Office of Student Support Services through Let's Talk.
- The staff member/administrator to whom the report is made shall document and take appropriate action to address the situation immediately and promptly report it verbally and in writing within 24 hours. The school principal is charged with receiving all reports of harassment, bullying, discrimination, or retaliation. Students and parents (guardians/caregivers), however, may make an oral or written complaint to any teacher, administrator, or school employee.
- All complaints shall be promptly investigated, forwarded to the school dignity act coordinator for monitoring and are treated as confidential and private to the extent possible within legal constraints.

# DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT

Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, intimidation, hazing and bias behaviors are unsafe and do not reflect respect for others as defined by the Schenectady City School District Code of Character, Conduct, & Support. The district has adopted a policy on Discrimination & Harassment (#9220) and a Bullying/Cyberbullying Policy (#7552) which states: Bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn, and an educator's ability to teach, and also threatens classroom and school safety. Cyberbullying is defined as harassment or bullying that occurs through any form of electronic communication. The district is committed to providing a school environment that values and teaches respect for all.

In recognition of the dangers of cyberbullying and related conduct that can occur off campus, the 2012 amendments to the Dignity Act broaden the definition of harassment and bullying to include conduct that occurs off school property and creates, or would foreseeably create, a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation, or abuse might reach school property (Education Law 11 [7]).

## If you are being bullied:

- Tell someone – a parent (guardian/caregiver) teacher, counselor
- Calmly tell the student to stop ... or say nothing and walk away

## If you, or someone you know is being bullied:

- If you feel safe, be an “upstander” and
  - Tell the bully to stop by saying, “It’s not right to treat someone like that.”
  - Offer support to the student being bullied, be a friend
  - Don’t encourage the bully by laughing, taking or posting pictures/video, or by joining in
  - Tell other bystanders how to help stop bullying
- If you don’t feel safe:
  - Tell an adult
  - Encourage the bullied student to talk to a trusted adult

## What do I do if my child is bullying others?

- Develop clear and consistent rules within your family for your child’s behavior
- Praise and reinforce your child for following rules and use non-physical consequences for rule violation
- Carefully supervise and monitor your child’s activities
- Know who your child’s friends are and how and where they spend free time
- Encourage your child to get involved in pro-social activities such as clubs, music, or sports
- Share your concerns with your child’s teacher, counselor and/or principal
- Work together to send clear messages to your child that bullying must stop
- If you need additional help, talk with a school counselor or mental health professional
- Educate yourself on social media platforms

## What Does Digital Citizenship Mean?

Good digital citizenship engages young students and shows them how to connect, empathize, and create lasting relationships with each other. Poor digital citizenship, on the other hand, includes cyberbullying, irresponsible social media usage and a general lack of knowledge about how to safely use the internet. It is important we teach our students about the importance of good digital citizenship.

# SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION

SCHOOL NAME	PHONE NUMBER
<b>ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS</b>	
<b>Hamilton Elementary School</b> 1091 Webster St. Schenectady, NY. 12303	Ph: 518-881-3720   Fax: 518-881-3722
<b>Howe Elementary School</b> 1065 Baker Ave. Schenectady, NY 12309	Ph: 518-370-8295   Fax: 518-881-3542
<b>Keane Elementary School</b> 1252 Albany St., Schenectady, NY. 12304	Ph: 518-881-3960   Fax: 518-881-3962
<b>Lincoln Elementary School</b> 2 Robinson St., Schenectady, NY 12304	Ph: 518-370-8355   Fax: 518-395-3576
<b>Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School</b> 918 Stanley St., Schenectady, NY 12307	Ph: 518-370-8360   Fax: 518-370-8363
<b>Paige Elementary School</b> 104 Elliott Ave., Schenectady, NY 12304	Ph: 518-881-3520   Fax: 518-881-3522
<b>Pleasant Valley Elementary School</b> 1097 Forest Rd., Schenectady, NY. 12303	Ph: 518-881-3640   Fax: 518-881-3742
<b>Van Corlaer Elementary School</b> 2300 Guilderland Ave., Schenectady, NY. 12306	Ph: 518-370-8270   Fax: 518-881-3742
<b>Woodlawn Elementary School</b> 3311 Wells Ave., Schenectady, NY 12304	Ph: 518-370-8280   Fax: 518-370-8283
<b>Yates Elementary School</b> 725 Salina St., Schenectady, NY 12308	Ph: 518-370-8320   Fax: 518-881-3862
<b>Zoller Elementary School</b> 1880 Lancaster St., Schenectady, Ny. 12308	Ph: 518-370-8290   Fax: 518-881-3882
<b>MIDDLE SCHOOLS</b>	
<b>Central Park Middle School</b> 421 Elm St., Schenectady, NY. 12304	Ph: 518-370-8250   Fax: 518-881-3662
<b>Mont Pleasant Middle School</b> 1121 Forest Rd., Schenectady, NY. 12303	Ph: 518-370-8160   Fax: 518-881-3562
<b>Oneida Middle School</b> 1529 Oneida St., Schenectady, NY. 12308	Ph: 518-370-8260   Fax: 518-370-8267
<b>HIGH SCHOOL</b>	
<b>Schenectady High School</b> 1445 The Plaza, Schenectady, NY. 12308	Ph: 518-881-2044 X-44801   Fax: 518-881-3802
<b>Steinmetz Freshmen Leadership Academy</b> 880 Oakwood Ave., Schenectady, NY. 12303	Ph: 518-881-2030 X-30100   Fax: 518-881-3602
<b>Early College High School</b> 433 State St., Schenectady, NY. 12308	Ph: 518-881-2710   Fax: 518-836-0997
<b>WASHINGTON IRVING EDUCATION CENTER (Big Picture Learning, Special Programs, Adult Education, &amp; Tutoring)</b>	
522 Mumford St., Schenectady, NY 12307	Ph: 518-370-8220   Fax: 518-370-8225
	19

# VISITORS TO OUR SCHOOLS

The Board of Education encourages parents, guardians, caregivers, and community members to visit the district schools and classrooms to observe the work of students, teachers, and other staff. The school principal or their designee is responsible for their school grounds. Since schools are a place of work and learning, the following expectations must be followed:

- Anyone who is not a regular staff member or student of the school is considered a visitor. This includes contractors, guests, & volunteers.
- Each district building has one entrance designated as the “main entrance” where all visitors will enter, and visitor management system will be located.
- Visitors will present a photo ID which will be recorded in the visitor management system. Currently the District utilizes “Raptor” software, which clears visitors against local databases and the NYS Sex Offender Registry.
- All visitors to District buildings are required to show ID for Raptor clearance to gain access to buildings and school grounds. If a parent, guardian, or caregiver does not have an ID, the school principal will work with them to find a solution.
- Visitors will be issued a visitor’s badge/sticker which must be always worn while in a district building or on school grounds.
- Visitors must return the visitor’s badge and sign out at the Main Entrance before leaving the building they are visiting.
- All visitors are expected to abide by district policies regarding visitors as well as all NYS and local laws while on school property.
- Anyone on school property or attending a school function is expected to conduct themselves in a respectful and orderly manner.



When the school principal or designee observes disruptive or disorderly conduct, they will advise the individual that the conduct is prohibited and ask that the behavior stop. If the behavior does not stop or if the conduct poses an immediate threat of injury to anyone or the property, the school principal will ask the visitor to leave immediately. If necessary, local law enforcement will be contacted to assist.



## LEVELS OF BEHAVIOR CONCERNS, INTERVENTIONS, AND RESOLUTIONS

School officials must refer to this document when determining which disciplinary intervention and consequence to impose. Practices that allow educators to address behavior concerns as opportunities for learning instead of punishment are far more successful in changing a student's behavior than imposing punitive measures. In determining how to best address inappropriate, & unacceptable behaviors, it is necessary to evaluate all the circumstances surrounding the behavior.

There are many factors that must be considered before determining consequences and interventions, including:

- The student's age and health
- The student's disciplinary record
- Appropriateness of student's academic placement
- Disciplinary consequences and interventions applied
- Nature, severity, and scope of the behavior
- The circumstances in which the conduct occurred
- Student's understanding of the impact of their behavior
- Seriousness of the behavior and the degree of harm caused
- Impact on overall school community
- The student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP), and 504 Accommodation Plan, when applicable
- The student's response to intervention

**SCSD understands the importance of restorative practices when student behavioral issues affect the safety of the classroom and school or interfere with the learning of all students.**

Restorative Practices are interventions designed to hold students accountable for harm while addressing the needs of students, staff, and the school community. Restorative practice may be defined as a way of thinking and responding to conflict and problems and one which includes all participants. Collectively, they determine a logical and balanced resolution. Examples of restorative practices include family group counseling, classroom circles, reparation of harm, therapeutic/resource strategies (mental health treatment, anger management and/or behavior coaching).

When choosing interventions and consequences for student behavior, teachers, administrators, and all staff must balance SCSD's goals of ensuring equity, minimizing disruptions, and maximizing student instructional time. Consequences paired with meaningful instruction and guidance (corrective feedback and re-teaching) offer students an opportunity to learn from their mistakes.



# PRE-KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 3

Aggressive behavior in young children is often a result of a child's unskillful attempt to communicate what they want, need and/or don't like. When a child engages in a violent act that threatens or harms other children or makes the learning environment feel unsafe, special procedures need to be in place to ensure that any children involved receive immediate attention.

The Schenectady City School District is committed to reducing and significantly limiting expulsion and suspension practices, with the goal of eliminating these practices in all early childhood settings.

If a student in grades Pre-K through 3 engages in pervasive or serious aggressive acts that cause injury or threaten children's safety in the classroom, the principal can determine the most appropriate interventions and request an out of school suspension.



**Any suspension of a student in grades Pre-K through 3 requires approval from the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services.** The principal must immediately provide written notification to the Superintendent's designee upon suspension. In addition, **an intervention plan should be developed, and parents (guardians/caregivers) invited to be directly involved in its development.**

## LEVELS OF BEHAVIORS AND RESPONSES

The Schenectady City School District Code of Character, Conduct, & Support includes five levels of possible response to inappropriate behavior. Each inappropriate behavior is assigned to one or more levels of intervention/response.

If the behavior is assigned to or falls under two or more levels, the lowest level of intervention and disciplinary response should be imposed first. For example, if a student refuses to follow directions, intervention strategies and responses in Level 1 should be issued before moving to any response in Level 2.

In all cases, the school personnel authorized to impose the consequence or response must inform the student of the alleged misconduct and must investigate the facts surrounding it. All students will have an opportunity to present their version of the facts to the school personnel imposing the disciplinary consequence. If students are given penalties other than a verbal warning, parents, guardians, and caregivers should be notified before the consequence is imposed.

The following pages present an overview of each of the resolutions to behaviors and a chart that outlines grade appropriate responses based upon the level of offense. You will notice that as behaviors increase in severity (1 being least and 5 being most severe), the response becomes more intense (A being least and D being most intense). Please note that the student's grade level is considered for all behaviors and responses. The chart is on page 26 and a listing of behaviors on the range of resolutions at each level is located on pages 27-31.

# PROGRESSIVE CONSEQUENCE (RESOLUTION)

Understanding consequences as “teachable moments” is fundamental to a positive approach to discipline. Instead of seeking punishment, progressive consequences seek to ensure accountability and behavior change.

With progressive consequences, a student’s first violation will usually merit a lower-level consequence than subsequent violations. A variety of factors however are considered before determining consequence. In instances where a student’s conduct is dangerous or threatens the safety of others, more severe disciplinary action may be warranted, even if it is the student’s first violation.



**With progressive consequences, we aim to help students:**

- Understand why the behavior is unacceptable
- Understand the harm the behavior caused and the impact that it has
- Take responsibility for their action
- Be given the opportunity to repair the harm caused by their behavior
- Be given the opportunity to learn pro-social strategies and skills to use in the future



Every reasonable effort should be made to correct student misbehavior through interventions and other school-based resources. Interventions are essential because inappropriate behavior or violations of the code of character, conduct, & support may be symptomatic of more serious problems that students are experiencing such as homelessness, food insecurity, trauma, and loss. It is imperative that school personnel be sensitive to any issues that may influence the behavior of students and respond in a manner that is most supportive of their needs. SCSD supports a trauma sensitive schools’ model which provides all staff with professional development in responsive and supportive intervention strategies.

When student conduct becomes a disruption to the educational process, school staff and principals respond respectfully, logically, appropriately, and consistently.

## THE IMPACT OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

Suspension from school does not benefit the suspended student or peers. Not only is a student who is suspended from school less likely to graduate but being suspended also increases a student’s risk for dropping out of school. A single 9<sup>th</sup> grade suspension doubles the risk that a student will drop out of school.

Research also shows that within 12 months of being suspended from school, a student is 50% more likely to engage in anti-social behavior and 70% more likely to engage in violent behavior. Out-of-school suspension should be avoided whenever possible. If a suspension is necessary, it should always be coupled with intense intervention and support.

# LEVELS OF BEHAVIOR CONCERNS AND RESOLUTIONS

**LEVEL 1** responses aim to teach, correct behavior, and promote the practice of pro-social behaviors, self-discipline, and healthy well-being. Teachers are encouraged to try a variety of teaching and classroom management strategies.

1

**Classroom interventions and responses** include but are not limited to attendance intervention plan, turn around or sensory room, respectful verbal reprimand, redirection, special seating, parent conference and/or call, social consequences, strict supervised study, detention, behavior contract, routing slip, peer mediation, withdrawal of computer privileges, restorative practices and/or referral to SBST. The responses are designed to prevent minor behavior issues from becoming major incidents.

**LEVEL 2** interventions involve school administration and aim to correct behavior by stressing the seriousness of the behavior while keeping the student in school. Responses might be like those in Level 1 but are often more focused and stretch beyond the immediate situation.

2

**Student support team interventions and responses** include but are not limited to attendance intervention plan, turn around or sensory room, respectful verbal reprimand, redirection, special seating, parent conference and/or call, social consequences, strict supervised study, detention, behavior contract, routing slip, peer mediation, withdrawal of computer privileges, restorative practices and/or referral to SBST.

More intensive responses include half day or less in-school suspension, exclusion from extra-curricular activities for 1-4 days, in-school suspension, teacher/schedule change, referral to outside agency, out-of-school suspension for 1, 2 or 3 days.

**LEVEL 3** violations are more serious in nature and jeopardize order, safety and/or include property damage. Level 3 interventions may involve short-term removal of a student from the environment depending on the severity of the behavior. The duration of a short-term suspension is to be limited as much as possible, while still addressing the behavior.

3

**Suspension and referral responses** depend on the behavior. More intensive responses in Level 3 could include out-of-school suspension for 4 or 5 days, temporary removal from class, restitution of property or repair of damage, informal hearing, campus or community service, referral to attendance supervisor and/or a family home visit, including a call home.

# LEVELS OF BEHAVIOR CONCERNS AND RESOLUTIONS

**LEVEL 4** behaviors threaten the safety and well-being of others. Response to Level 4 behaviors may include removing the student from the classroom or school environment because of the seriousness of the behavior. The duration of removal should be limited, as much as possible, while still addressing the behavior.

4

**Responses to Level 4** include all responses in level 3 and/or more intensive responses such as 5-day suspension with formal hearing, referral to appropriate outside agency, counseling, or drug treatment program and/or diversion.

**LEVEL 5** behaviors are the most extreme, often using force, causing harm or injury, involving violence, possession, or use of a weapon, causing substantial risk or a pattern of persistent Level 4 behavior.

5

**Responses to level 5** encompass all responses in Level 4 including 5-day suspension with formal hearing, referral to appropriate law enforcement agency, counseling, or drug treatment program and/or diversion.

**Interventions and consequences should be implemented in a culturally responsive and consistent manner across all schools and grade levels.**



# RESOLUTIONS TO INFRACTIONS

The chart below indicates grade-appropriate responses based upon level of offense. The letter (A, B, C, D) corresponds with possible responses as outlined by level on the following pages. For example, for Level 2 offenses, responses with letter B should only be considered for high school students. You will find the letter on the next pages under “Range of Responses” heading.

As you move down the chart (1-5) behaviors increase with severity (1 being least and 5 being most severe), and across the chart (A-D), the response becomes more intense (with D being most intense). Lower-level responses are often used in combination with the aligned level of response.

MAXIMUM LEVEL CONSEQUENCES				
LEVEL OFFENSE	PRE-K – GR 2	GRADES 3-5	GRADES 6-8	GRADES 9-12
1	A	A	A	A
2	A	A	B	B
3	A	B	B	C
4	B	B	D	D
5	B	C	D	D

# RESOLUTIONS TO INFRACTIONS

## LEVEL 1 BEHAVIOR

These responses and interventions aim to teach and correct behavior and promote the practice of pro-social behaviors, self-discipline, and healthy well-being. Teachers are encouraged to try a variety of teaching and classroom management strategies.

1

BEHAVIOR	CODE
Truancy (first instance)	102
Dress Code Violation	103
1-10 tardiness to school/class during the year	109
11-15 tardiness to school/class during the year	118
16-26 tardiness to school/class during the year	119
Violation of Personal Electronics Devices Policy (#7318) 1 <sup>st</sup> occurrence	126
Caught in hall sweep/checks	129
Selling of Items at school	130

RANGE OF RESOLUTIONS FOR LEVEL 1		
A	Intervention Plan	111
A	Turn Around Room or break	100
A	Sensory Room	114
A	Verbal Reprimand by Admin/Warning	101
A	Special Seating	102
A	Parent/Caregiver Conference (In Person/Phone/Virtual)	103
A	Counseling in School	104
A	Social Consequences/Withdrawal of Privileges (1-2 days)	105
A	Strict Supervised Study (1/2 day or less with certified staff)	107
A	Detention	108
A	Behavior Contract/Plan	109
A	Use of Routing Slip	112
A	Conference with Student	113
A	Accountability Project	316
A	Withdrawal of Computer Privileges	317
A	Restorative Practices	327
A	Referral to SBST or CSE	321

# RESOLUTIONS TO INFRACTIONS

## LEVEL 2 BEHAVIOR

2

These responses and interventions aim to correct behavior by stressing the seriousness of the behavior while keeping the student in school. Responses might be like those in Level 1, or used in combination, but are often more focused and stretch beyond the immediate situation

### RANGE OF RESOLUTIONS FOR LEVEL 2

BEHAVIOR	CODE
Using profane, obscene, vulgar, lewd, or abusive language or gestures	200
Making excessive or distracting movements or noises	201
Repeatedly talking out in class or out of turn	202
Throwing objects (without physical injury to others)	203
Truancy (repeated)	204
Smoking/possession of smoking materials (ex. Tobacco/vape)	207
Using forged notes, excuses or passes	208
Gambling	209
Failure to serve detention	210
More than 26 tardiness to school/class during the year	216
Failure to comply with sign in or ID system	221
Multiple lunching-skipping class	222
Truant from CTE Programming	226
Lying or intentionally misleading school personnel	227
Misusing, breaking, or destroying property belonging to school or others valued below \$500	228
Taking or attempting to take property belonging to others valued under \$500	229
Caught in hall sweep/checks-repeated (5 or more)	238
Refusal to serve in-school suspension	235
Academic Dishonesty (ex. Plagiarism, misuse of AI)	236
Leaving class without permission	237
Verbal Confrontation	239
Chronic Violation of Personal Electronics Devices Policy (#7318) multiple occurrence	240
Play Fighting	241

A	Intervention Plan	111
A	Turn Around Room or break	100
A	Sensory Room	114
A	Verbal Reprimand by Admin/Warning	101
A	Special Seating	102
A	Parent/Caregiver Conference (In Person/Phone/Virtual)	103
A	Counseling in School	104
A	Social Consequences/Withdrawal of Privileges (1-2 days)	105
A	Strict Supervised Study (1/2 day or less with certified staff)	107
A	Detention	108
A	Behavior Contract/Plan	109
A	Use of Routing Slip	112
A	Conference with Student	113
A	Accountability Project	316
A	Withdrawal of Computer Privileges	317
A	Restorative Practices	327
A	Referral to SBST or CSE	321
A	Parent/Caregiver, Teacher & Admin Conference	202
B	Half Day or Less in School Suspension	203
B	Exclusion from Extra-Curricular Activities 1-4 Days	204
B	In-School Suspension	205
B	Teacher/Schedule Change	206
B	Referral to treatment provider	208
B	Suspension Less Than a Day	230
B	Out of School Suspension - 1 Day	231

# RESOLUTIONS TO INFRACTIONS

## LEVEL 3 BEHAVIOR

## LEVEL 3: A, B & C RESPONSES

3

These responses and interventions may involve short-term removal of a student from the environment depending on the severity of the behavior. The duration of short-term suspension is to be limited as much as possible, while still addressing the behavior.

BEHAVIOR	CODE
Leaving school without permission	302
Unsafe driving on school property	307
Failure to identify self to an adult	318
Trespassing at or in another district school	319
Unauthorized presence in classroom or on school grounds	327
Physically pushing, hitting, kicking, biting, or scratching another person	330
Physically pushing through staff	331
Play fighting that escalated to physical conflict	332
Failure to follow emergency procedures	340
Posting, sending, or distributing derogatory, threatening, or lewd material	342

RANGE OF RESOLUTIONS FOR LEVEL 3					
A	Intervention Plan	111		A	Parent, Teacher & Admin Conference
A	Turn Around Room or break	100		B	Half Day or Less in School Suspension
A	Verbal Reprimand by Admin/Warning	101		B	Exclusion from Extra-Curricular Activities 1-4 Days
A	Special Seating	102		B	In-School Suspension
A	Parent Conference (In Person/Phone/Virtual)	103		B	Teacher/Schedule Change
A	Counseling in School	104		B	Referral to treatment provider
A	Social Consequences/ Withdrawal of Privileges (1-2 days)	105		B	Suspension Less Than a Day
A	Strict Supervised Study (1/2 day or less with certified staff)	107		B	Out of School Suspension 1 Day
A	Detention	108		B	Out of School Suspension 2 Days
A	Behavior Contract/Plan	109		B	Out of School Suspension 3 Days
A	Use of Routing Slip	112		C	Out of School Suspension 4 Days
A	Sensory Room	114		C	Out of School Suspension 5 Days
A	Conference with Student	113		C	Restitution of Property or Repair of Damage
A	Accountability Project	316		C	Informal Hearing
A	Withdrawal of Computer Privileges	317		C	Referral to Attendance Team/Supervisor
A	Referral to SBST or CSE	321		C	Family Home Visit
A	Restorative Practices	327		C	Family Home Visit
A	Sensory Room	114			

# RESOLUTIONS TO INFRACTIONS

## LEVEL 4 BEHAVIOR

## LEVEL 4: A, B, C & D RESPONSES

4

Responses and interventions may include removing the student from the classroom or school environment because of the seriousness of the behavior. The duration of removal should be limited as much as possible.

BEHAVIOR	CODE
Enabling access to school for unauthorized visitor	400
Threats to school	414
Violation of Code on School Bus	428
Taking or attempting to take property belonging to others (over \$500 including credit and bank cards)	429
Intimidation, menacing, discrimination, or threats that do not rise to DASA (Unfounded DASA)	430
Knowingly possessing property that belongs to others	432
Attempting to or throwing liquids or spitting on another person	431
Refusal of Search	433
Violates health & safety of others-ex. tattooing	434
Hits or injures adult attempting to intervene in physical violence	435
Recording, promoting/posting, or transmitting violence	436
Throwing objects causing physical injury	438

RANGE OF RESOLUTIONS FOR LEVEL 4				
A	Intervention Plan	111	B	In-School Suspension 205
A	Turn Around Room or break	100	B	Teacher/Schedule Change 206
A	Verbal Reprimand by Admin/Warning	101	B	Referral to treatment provider 208
A	Special Seating	102	B	Suspension Less Than a Day 230
A	Parent Conference (In Person/Phone/Virtual)	103	B	Out of School Suspension 1 Day 231
A	Counseling in School	104	B	Out of School Suspension 2 Days 232
A	Social Consequences/ Withdrawal of Privileges (1-2 days)	105	B	Out of School Suspension 3 Days 233
A	Strict Supervised Study (1/2 day or less with certified staff)	107	C	Out of School Suspension 4 Days 234
A	Detention	108	C	Out of School Suspension 5 Days 235
A	Behavior Contract/Plan	109	C	Restitution of Property or Repair of Damage 306
A	Use of Routing Slip	112	C	Informal Hearing 318
A	Conference with Student	113	C	Referral to Attendance Supervisor/Team 322
A	Sensory Room	114	C	Family Home visit 325
A	Accountability Project	316	C	5-Day Suspension with Formal Hearing 401
A	Withdrawal of Computer Privileges	317	D	Referral to Appropriate Law Enforcement Agency 402
A	Restorative Practices	327	D	Mental Health Counseling or Drug Treatment Program 403
A	Referral to SBST or CSE	321	D	Diversion Program 406
A	Parent, Teacher & Admin Conference	202	D	Diversion Program 406
B	Half Day or Less in School Suspension	203		
B	Exclusion from Extra-Curricular Activities 1-4 Days	204		

# RESOLUTIONS TO INFRACTIONS

## LEVEL 5 BEHAVIOR

## LEVEL 5: A, B, C & D RESPONSES

5

Responses and interventions include, but are not limited to, suspension for five days or more, short-term suspension up to five days, counseling, or drug treatment and/or diversion.

BEHAVIOR		CODE	RANGE OF RESOLUTIONS FOR LEVEL 5			
Physical attack on student or staff without immediate provocation		540	A Intervention Plan	111	B In-School Suspension	205
Arson		507	A Turn Around Room or break	100	B Teacher/Schedule Change	206
Physical altercation between two or more students		510	A Verbal Reprimand by Admin/Warning	101	B Referral to treatment provider	208
Forced entry-school property (ex. school, classroom, desk, or locker)		530	A Special Seating	102	B Suspension Less Than a Day	230
Inciting or participating in an incident of group violence		521	A Parent Conference (In Person/Phone/Virtual)	103	B Out of School Suspension 1 Day	231
Vandalism, graffiti, or damage to property of school or others (over \$500)		531	A Counseling in School	104	B Out of School Suspension 2 Days	232
Engaging in sexual acts at school		545	A Social Consequences/ Withdrawal of Privileges (1-2 days)	105	B Out of School Suspension 3 Days	233
*Homicide		R501	A Strict Supervised Study (1/2 day or less with certified staff)	107	C Out of School Suspension 4 Days	234
*Reportable sex offenses		R502	A Detention	108	C Out of School Suspension 5 Days	235
Other (non-reportable) sex offenses		503	A Behavior Contract/Plan	109	C Restitution of Property or Repair of Damage	306
*Assault with serious physical injury		R505	A Use of Routing Slip	112	C Informal Hearing	318
*Bomb Threat		R514	A Conference with Student	113	C Referral to Attendance Supervisor/Team	322
*False Alarm		R515	A Sensory Room	114	C Family Home visit	325
*Use, possession, or sale of drugs		R518	A Accountability Project	316	C 5-Day Suspension with Formal Hearing	401
*Use, possession, or sale of alcohol		R519	A Withdrawal of Computer Privileges	317	D Referral to Appropriate Law Enforcement Agency	402
*Weapons possession – routine security check		R517S	A Restorative Practices	327	D Mental Health Counseling or Drug Treatment Program	403
*Weapons possession or use – other		R5170	A Referral to SBST or CSE	321	D Diversion Program	406
Weapons possession or use-other (non-reportable)		5170	A Parent, Teacher & Admin Conference	202	D Expulsion	408
*Material incident of discrimination, harassment, bullying (Cyber) (Founded DASA)		R530C	B Half Day or Less in School Suspension	203	D Expulsion	408
* Material incident of discrimination, harassment, bullying (Not Cyber) (Founded DASA)		R530	B Exclusion from Extra-Curricular Activities 1-4 Days	204		

\*When using R codes please check [NYSE VADIR GLOSSARY](#)

# UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF DISCIPLINE

The amount of due process a student is entitled to receive before a penalty is imposed depends on the penalty. In all cases, the school personnel who is authorized to impose the penalty, must inform the student of the alleged misconduct, and must investigate the facts surrounding the alleged misconduct. All students will have an opportunity to present their version of the facts to the school personnel imposing the disciplinary penalty in connection with the imposition of the penalty.

## **DETENTION**

Teachers, principals, other school administrators, designees, and the superintendent may use lunch, before-school, and after-school detention as a penalty for student misconduct in situations where removal from the classroom or suspension would be inappropriate.

Detention is imposed only after the student's parents (guardians/caregivers) have been notified and arrangements for appropriate post-detention transportation home have been made. If staff transports students home, at least two staff members must be in the vehicle and they must have parent permission. (Per Policy # 5720Z)

In elementary or middle school, the teacher and/or administrator is responsible for notifying the parent (guardian/caregiver) of the detention and for ensuring that there is an appropriate plan for transportation home, following the detention.

The school will provide a late bus to ensure appropriate transportation home following detention.

## **SUSPENSION FROM TRANSPORTATION**

If a student engages in inappropriate behavior on a school bus, the bus driver is expected to bring the misconduct to the school principal's attention. The school principal will call or conference with parent, guardian, or caregiver to discuss the behavior and determine appropriate consequence.

Students who exhibit dangerous or chronically problematic behavior on the bus may have their riding privileges suspended by the school principal, superintendent, or their designees. In such cases, the student's parents (guardian/caregiver) will become responsible for getting their child to and from school safely. Should the suspension from transportation lead to school absence, the district will make appropriate arrangements to provide for the student's education. The student suspended from transportation is not entitled to a full hearing pursuant to Education Law 3214. The student and parents (guardians/caregivers), however, will be provided with a reasonable opportunity for an informal conference with the school principal or the principal's designee to discuss the conduct and the penalty. An SBST meeting will be conducted to develop an intervention plan.

## **TEACHER DISCIPLINARY REMOVAL OF DISRUPTIVE STUDENTS**

A student's behavior can affect a teacher's ability to teach and make it difficult for other students in the classroom to learn. In most instances, the classroom teacher can control a student's behavior and maintain or restore control over the classroom by using good classroom management techniques such as a brief calming/sensory break in the classroom or an alternative setting. The goal is to give the student an opportunity to regain their self-control and readiness to learn. These actions do not constitute a disciplinary removal.

If a student is removed, the teacher should provide the student and parents (guardians/caregivers), with an explanation as to why he or she is being removed and an opportunity to explain his or her version of the relevant events. 32

# UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF DISCIPLINE

## TEACHER DISCIPLINARY REMOVAL OF DISRUPTIVE STUDENTS – CONTINUED

If the student poses a danger to self or others, the teacher may order the student to be removed immediately. In the case of serious misconduct, the teacher may request that the principal exclude the student from class pursuant to subdivision 3 of Section 3214 of the Education Law – and not be re-admitted until after the principal, parents, and teacher have conferred jointly.

The teacher must complete the district's "Disciplinary Removal" form and meet with the school principal or designee as soon as possible – but no later than the end of the school day – to explain the circumstances of the removal and present the removal form. The school principal or designee may overturn the removal of a student from class if:

- The charges against the student are not supported by substantial evidence.
- The student's removal is otherwise in violation of law, including the code of character, conduct, & support.

The principal or designee may overturn a removal at any point between receiving the referral form issued by the teacher and the close of business on the day following the end of the 48-hour period, whichever comes first.

Any student removed from the classroom by the teacher shall be offered continued educational programming and activities until they are permitted to return to the classroom.

The principal will keep a record – on the district form – of all student removals and ensure the SBST convenes to evaluate the root cause and intervene.

## IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

School principals and the superintendent are authorized to place students, who would otherwise be suspended from school because of a code of character, conduct, & support violation, in "in-school suspension." A student subjected to in-school suspension is not entitled to a full hearing, pursuant to Education Law 3214. The student and parents (guardians/caregivers), however, will be provided with a reasonable opportunity for an informal conference with the principal imposing the in-school suspension to discuss the conduct and penalty involved. They will also be provided with academic work, from the classroom teachers, to complete.

## STRICT SUPERVISED STUDY

Strict supervised study may be used when a student is sent to an alternative location for half a day or less for a time out period. The location must be staffed with a certified staff member such as a teacher, teaching assistant, or social worker.



# UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF DISCIPLINE

## OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

- Suspension from school shall be imposed in accordance with the requirement of applicable law and this *District Code of Character, Conduct and Support*.
- Suspension from school is a severe penalty which may be imposed only upon a student whose violent actions or whose conduct otherwise endangers the safety, moral character, physical or mental health or welfare of others. The board of education retains authority to suspend a student, but places primary responsibility for the suspension of students with the superintendent and school principals.
- All staff members must immediately report and refer violent incidents to the school principal or the superintendent as a violation of the *District Code of Character, Conduct, and Support*. All recommendations and referrals shall be made in writing unless the conditions underlying the recommendation or referral warrant immediate action.
- The superintendent or principal, upon receiving a recommendation or referral for suspension, shall gather the facts relative to the matter and record them for subsequent presentation if necessary.

## SHORT TERM (5 DAYS OR LESS) SUSPENSION FROM SCHOOL

- When the superintendent or principal proposes to suspend a student for misconduct, for 5 days or less, pursuant to Education Law 3214 (3), the suspending authority must immediately notify the student verbally.
- If the student denies the misconduct, the suspending authority must provide an explanation of the basis for the proposed suspension. The suspending authority must also notify the student's parents, guardians, or caregivers in writing that the student may be suspended from school. The parent will be notified by phone, text, or email, followed by a written notice sent by personal delivery, express mail delivery, or some other means that is reasonably calculated to assure receipt of the notice within 24 hours of the decision to propose suspension – at the last known address for the parents, guardians, or caregivers.
- The notice shall provide a description of the charges against the student and the incident for which the suspension is proposed and shall inform the parents, guardians, or caregivers, of the right to request an immediate informal conference with the principal.
- Translation services will be offered at all stages of the process.
- The notice and opportunity for an informal conference shall take place before the student is suspended, unless the student's presence in school poses a continuing danger to persons, property, or an on-going threat of disruption to the academic process. If the student's presence does post such a danger or threat of disruption, the notice and opportunity for an informal conference shall take place as soon after the suspension as is reasonably practical.

# UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF DISCIPLINE

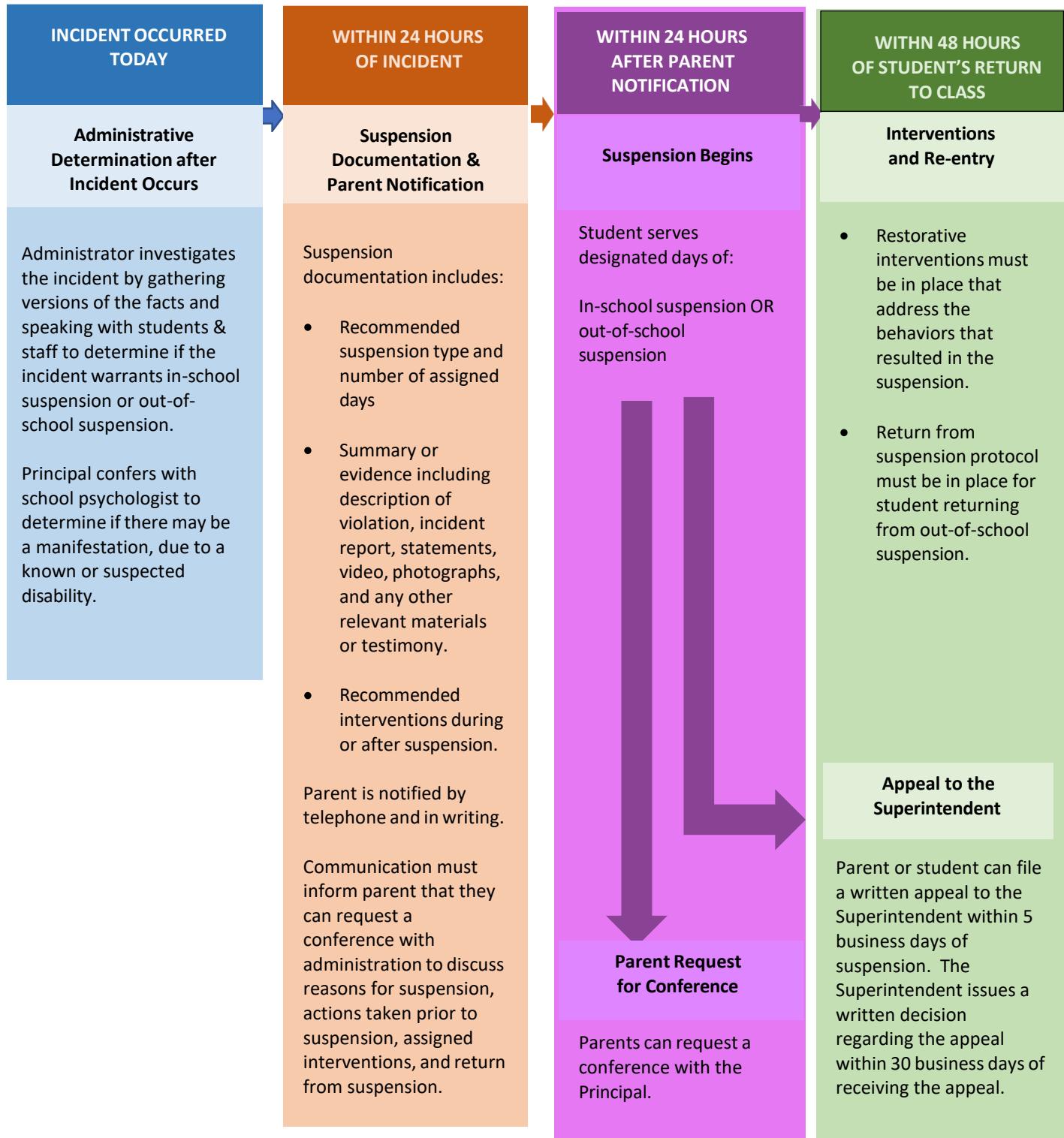
## SHORT TERM (5 DAYS OR LESS) SUSPENSION FROM SCHOOL - CONTINUED

- After the conference, the principal shall promptly advise the parents, guardians, or caregivers in writing of the decision.
- The principal shall advise the parents, guardians, or caregivers that if they are not satisfied with the decision and wish to pursue the matter, they must file a written appeal to the superintendent within five (5) business days, unless they can show extraordinary circumstances precluding them from doing so.
- The superintendent shall issue a written decision regarding the appeal within thirty (30) business days of receiving the appeal.
- If the parents, guardians, or caregivers are not satisfied with the Superintendent's decision, they must file a written appeal to the board of education with the clerk of the board within ten (10) business days of the date of the superintendent's decision, unless they can show extraordinary circumstances precluding them from doing so. Only final decisions of the board may be appealed to the commissioner within thirty (30) days of the decision. The district may, in its discretion, continue to impose the suspension during the pendency of any appeal.

## LONG-TERM (MORE THAN 5 DAYS) SUSPENSION FROM SCHOOL

- When the Superintendent or Principal determines that a suspension for more than five (5) days may be warranted, they shall give reasonable notice to the student and their parents, guardians, or caregivers, of the right to a fair hearing.
- At the hearing, the student shall have the right to be represented by counsel, the right to question witnesses against them and the right to produce witnesses and other evidence on their behalf.
- The superintendent shall personally hear and determine the proceeding, or may, in their decision, designate a hearing officer to conduct the hearing. The hearing officer shall be authorized to administer oaths and to issue subpoenas in conjunction with the proceeding before them. A record of the hearing shall be maintained but no stenographic transcript should be required. Tape recording shall be deemed a satisfactory record. The hearing officer shall make findings of fact and recommendations as to the appropriate measure of consequence to the Superintendent. The report of the hearing officer shall be advisory only and the Superintendent may accept all or any part thereof.
- The Superintendent shall render a written decision.
- Appeal of the decision of the Superintendent may be made to the Board of Education. The Board will make its decision based solely upon the record before it. All appeals to the Board must be in writing and submitted to the Clerk of the Board within thirty (30) business days of the date of the Superintendent's decision, unless the parents, (guardians/caregivers) can show extraordinary circumstances precluding them from doing so. The Board may adopt or reject, in whole or in part, the decision of the Superintendent. Final decision of the Board may be appealed to the Commissioner within thirty (30) days of the decision. The district may, in its discretion, continue to impose the suspension during the pendency of any appeal.

# SHORT-TERM IN-SCHOOL OR OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION PROCEDURES



**NOTE:** When a student of any age is removed from class by a teacher or when a student of compulsory education age is suspended from school pursuant to Education Law 3214, the district will take immediate steps to provide alternative means of instruction for the student.

## LONG-TERM IN-SCHOOL OR OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION PROCEDURES



# DIVERSION (Grades 6-12)

Practices that allow educators to address disciplinary matters as opportunities for learning instead of punishment are far more successful in changing a student's behavior than a reliance on increasing punitive measures. The diversion process is a therapeutic pathway that a student and parent can choose when a student has been referred to a superintendent's hearing and has been assigned a long-term suspension. The diversion program may shorten the length of suspension if the student engages in a therapeutic treatment plan. After a superintendent hearing, a notice of decision letter is mailed to the parent and student. This letter includes information about the diversion program and how to sign up.

The diversion process begins with an intake appointment. At the intake there is a parent and student interview by trained SCSD clinicians, and the student is assessed using the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI) and/or the Youth Adolescent Screening Instrument (YASI). These assessments help to identify any underlying causes for the behavior or interventions that may be needed.

The next step is for the parent and student to participate in an emergency response team meeting (ERT) along with the school team (administrator, school counselor, parent liaison, and other necessary or requested support staff). The meeting is facilitated by the diversion team clinician. The team discusses relevant assessment results and attempts to identify any root causes for the behavior, and then matches evidence-based interventions and develops a treatment plan.

Diversion is a diagnostic and prescriptive process, using evidence-based treatments designed to identify and address underlying causes for behavior and to reduce recidivism. Evidence-based interventions include:

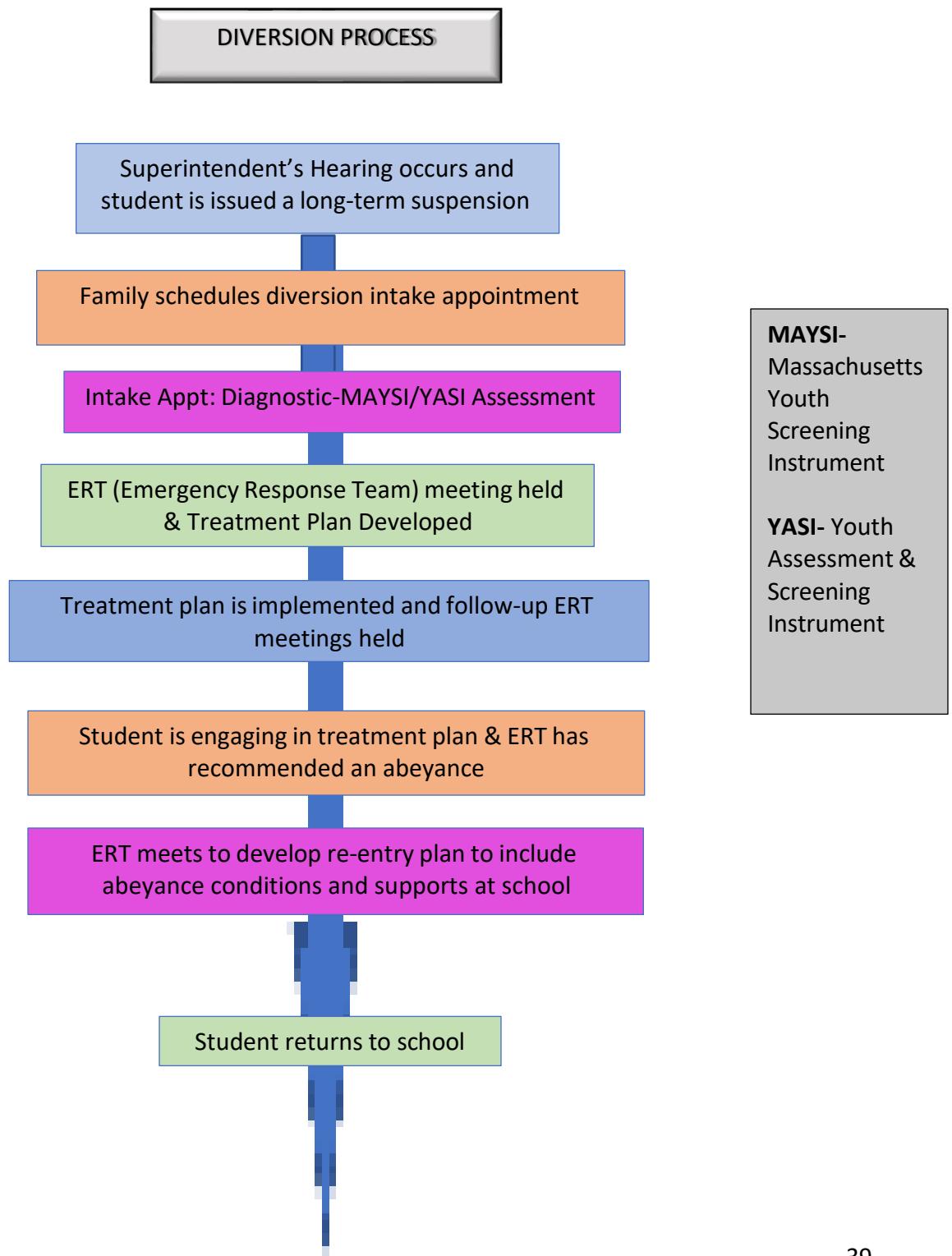
- Strengthening Families
- Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT)
- Trauma Focused Cognitive Therapy
- Anger Replacement Training (ART)
- Family Functional Therapy (FFT)
- Restorative Practices/Circles
- T4C Thinking for Change
- Substance Abuse Evaluation & Treatment

Other best practice interventions are often also considered when developing a treatment plan. Examples include:

- Mediation
- Fire Prevention
- Mentoring
- Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plan
- Check and Connect System with Trusted Adult
- Teen Intervene
- Interactive Journaling
- Girls Circle
- Decision Points

# DIVERSION (Grades 6-12)

**Abeyance** is when a student earns an early return to school while serving a long-term suspension. It comes with a set of abeyance conditions which are determined by the ERT (Emergency Response team) and often occurs when the student has engaged in their treatment plan, is regularly attending tutoring, and has proven they no longer pose a safety risk at school.



# RETURNING TO SCHOOL AFTER SUSPENSION

**Re-entry meetings** must occur for students suspended for 5 days or less within a week of their return. Students suspended for longer than 5 days must have a re-entry meeting by the day of their return. Plans are to be developed that assure students will have the care, intervention and support needed for successful re-entry to school after suspension. Every plan will be customized for the student based on what they need to be educationally successful and will be an extension of the treatment/intervention the student may have been receiving while on suspension. The re-entry process will vary depending on the length of suspension and may include the student, the principal, support staff (counselor or social worker), parent liaison, RP Specialist, safety staff, and parents/caregivers. Virtual meeting options should be made available to families if they prefer. It is important the student continues to be monitored and engaged with their identified supports. Ensuring that the student does not repeat the behavior that put them on suspension (recidivism) is a critical component of the planning and support provided. If a student has been suspended for a physical altercation, they should be scheduled to meet with a Restorative Practice Specialist upon their return (sooner if possible).



**“Every child deserves a champion; an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can possibly be.”**

~Rita Pierson

# MINIMUM PERIODS OF SUSPENSION

## STUDENTS WHO BRING WEAPONS TO SCHOOL

According to Policy# 7360 (Weapons in School & The Gun Free Schools Act) any student found guilty of bringing a weapon onto school property may be subject to suspension from school for one calendar year. Before being suspended, the student will have an opportunity for a hearing pursuant to Education Law 3214. **Weapon:** A firearm is defined in 18 USC 921 for purposes of the Gun-Free Schools Act. It also means any other gun, BB gun, pistol, revolver, shotgun, rifle, machine gun disguised as a gun, dagger, dirk, razor, stiletto, switchblade knife, gravity knife, brass knuckles, slingshot, metal knuckle knife, box cutter, cane sword, electronic dart gun, sandbag, or sand club, loaded or blank cartridges, Kung Fu star, electronic stun gun, pepper spray or other noxious spray, and any other deadly or dangerous instrument possessed on school property with intent to use the same unlawfully against another. Imitation guns, such as Orbeez or pellet guns may cause serious injury and are prohibited from being possessed or used on school property.

**Vadir: Reportable Weapons Possession:** An act committed by a person 10 years of age or older which would constitute a felony under Article 265.00 of the Penal Law taking into consideration the developmental capacity of the person to form the intent to commit such act, and where the school has referred the person to the police for the act.

## STUDENTS WHO COMMIT OTHER VIOLENT ACTS

Any student who is found to have committed a violent act, may be subject to suspension from school for at least five (5) days. If the proposed penalty **is the minimum five-day suspension**, the student and the student's parent will be given the same notice and opportunity for an informal conference given to all students subject to a short-term suspension. If the proposed penalty **exceeds the minimum five-day suspension**, the student and the student's parent will be given the same notice and opportunity for a hearing given to all students subject to a long-term suspension.

## THE SUPERINTENDENT HAS THE AUTHORITY TO MODIFY THE LENGTH OF SUSPENSION ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS

In deciding whether to modify the penalty, the superintendent may consider the following:

- Student's age
- Student's grade
- Student's prior disciplinary record
- Superintendent's belief that other forms of discipline may be more effective
- Input from parents, teachers, and/or others
- Other extenuating circumstances
- A student with a disability may be suspended only in accordance with the requirements of state and federal law.



# STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The procedures relating to the discipline of students with (or suspected) disabilities requires that school administrators work closely with their school psychologist and the Committee on Special Education (CSE) to consider whether the behavior is a 'manifestation' of the student's disability. How this question is answered affects how the discipline should be implemented. For more information see Policy # 7690 Discipline of Students with Disabilities).

The principal has the authority to suspend a student with a disability for a period, not to exceed five consecutive school days, and not to exceed the amount of time that a non-disabled student would be subject to suspension for the same behavior.

The superintendent may order the placement of a student with a disability into an interim alternate educational placement (IAES), another setting or suspension of up to ten consecutive school days for the same behavior, if the superintendent determines that the student warrants a suspension (in accordance with Education Law 3241). The duration of any such suspension or removal shall not exceed the amount of time that non-disabled students would be subject to suspension for the same behavior. The superintendent may order additional suspensions, of not more than ten consecutive school days, in the same year, for separate incidents of misconduct.

Any suspension of a student with a disability, for more than ten school days, over the course of the school year, shall be referred to the committee on special education for placement in an IAES (Interim Alternative Education Setting) during the time of such suspensions – when the suspension constitutes a disciplinary change in placement. If the CSE finds that the behavior leading to the suspension is related to the student's disability, no further suspension may be imposed, and the student must return to the placement they were in prior to the suspension, unless:

1. The CSE decides to recommend a new placement; or
2. The behavior involved drugs, weapons, or inflicted serious bodily injury.

There is an exception when the student is found guilty of possessing, using, selling, or soliciting illegal drugs, using, or possessing a weapon or inflicting serious bodily injury. In this case, the superintendent may suspend the student for up to 45 school days even if the manifestation team finds that the behavior leading to the suspension was related to the student's disability. During a superintendent's hearing if the manifestation team finds that the behavior leading to the student's suspension is not a manifestation of the student's disability, the student will be referred to the hearing for the penalty phase. The superintendent may impose the same period of suspension applicable to a non-disabled student.

If the superintendent concludes, based upon the evidence presented at the hearing, that maintaining the student in their current educational placement is unsafe, the matter will be referred to the CSE to determine whether additional steps can be reasonably taken to minimize the potential for harm. If the CSE is unable to identify additional supports or services to eliminate the concern for safety, and the CSE is unable to reach a mutually agreeable alternative plan to continue the student's education elsewhere, the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services may, after consultation with the Superintendent, initiate an expedited hearing or petition a court to seek permission to enforce a unilateral removal of a student.

# PROCEDURE FOR FORMAL HEARING OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES OR PRESUMED DISABILITIES

## DETERMINATION OF GUILT PHASE OF SUPERINTENDENT'S HEARING

DETERMINATION: STUDENT IS GUILTY OF ALLEGED MISCONDUCT

DETERMINATION: STUDENT IS NOT GUILTY OF ALLEGED MISCONDUCT

MANIFESTATION DETERMINATION MEETING

CSE MEETING IS HELD TO REVIEW STUDENT'S IEP AND PROGRAMMING

NOT A MANIFESTATION OF DISABILITY

Student will be disciplined in the same manner as a nondisabled student but will continue to receive IEP services

MANIFESTATION OF DISABILITY

Superintendent hearing is dismissed. Exception for charges of weapons, drugs, or serious bodily injury where penalty phase of hearing occurs for possible IAES

PENALTY PHASE OF SUPERINTENDENT'S HEARING

CSE MEETING HELD TO REVIEW STUDENT'S IEP AND PROGRAMMING

Any suspension 10 days or more is referred to the CSE.

CSE CONVENES IAES TO DETERMINE PLACEMENT AND SUPPORTS

A student will not be a student presumed to have a disability for discipline purposes if the district either:

1. Conducted an individual evaluation and determined that the student is not a student with a disability, or
2. The parent of the student has refused services, or
3. The parent of the student has not allowed an evaluation of the student pursuant to Section 200.4 of the commissioner's regulations.

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## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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During a superintendent's hearing, the hearing officer will ask whether the student is "suspected of having a disability." If the parent or school team answers "yes," an administrator from student support services will be called upon to make this determination, using one of more of the following criteria:

1. The parent of the student has expressed concern to the school district personnel **in writing** that the student needs special education.
2. The behavior or performance of the student demonstrates the need for special education, as defined by federal and state law and regulations.
3. The parent of the student has requested an individual evaluation of the student for special education services.
4. A teacher of the student, or other staff, has expressed concern about the behavior or performance of the student to the director of special education or to other school district personnel.

If it is determined that the student may be "suspected of having a disability," the student will be afforded the same protections as students with disabilities and shall be evaluated. Eligibility will be determined by the committee on special education in an expedited manner.



# THREAT ASSESSMENT

A threat assessment is an approach to violence prevention.

It is a way to analyze a wide range of situations and is conducted when a person(s) threatens to commit a violent act or engages in

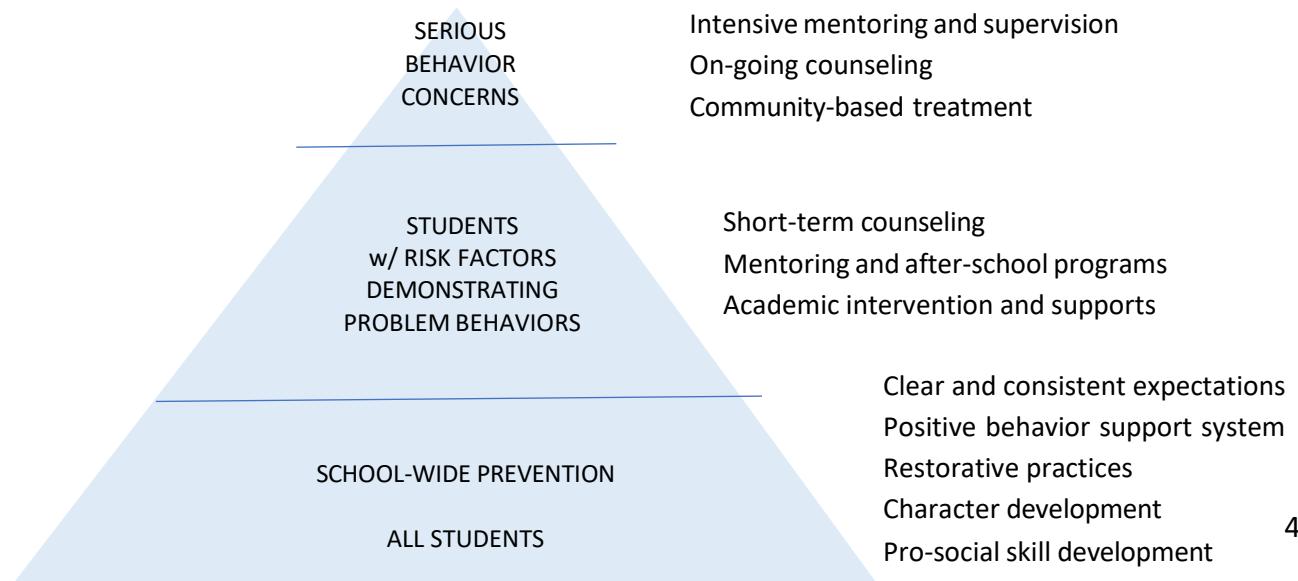
behavior that appears to threaten an act of violence. The process involves evaluating the threat and the circumstances surrounding it to uncover any evidence that indicates the threat is likely to be carried out. Student search can be a tool for maintaining safe schools, but school administrators must balance students' individual rights with the school community's need for a safe learning environment. School officials may conduct a search of lockers and/or student person/property if they have reasonable suspicion of a weapon, drugs, or possession of other items in violation of the Code of Character, Conduct, & Support.

SCSD staff are trained in the Virginia School Threat Assessment Guidelines (VSTAG), an evidence-based model.

**What is a threat?** A threat is an expression of intent to harm someone. Threats can be spoken, written, posted on social media, made through a phone call, or expressed in other ways. They can be direct, indirect, or implied. When in doubt about whether a behavior is a threat, we evaluate it as a threat.

There are several steps that take place when conducting a threat assessment. It is necessary to convene the trained threat assessment team, consider the context, investigate, determine the facts, gather information from multiple sources and more. Through the assessment, it will be determined if the threat is substantive (**threats where there is a serious intent to harm someone**) or transient (**there is no sustained intent to harm**).

**Why do we need threat assessment?** Schools need a safe, rational approach to evaluating potentially dangerous behavior. Media attention to high profile incidents resulted with the public becoming sensitized and creating misperceptions about the likelihood of violence in schools. The fear of school shootings drew an extreme reaction and resulted in an expansion of zero tolerance policies. With a zero tolerance, student can be automatically suspended even if the violation was accidental or posed no serious threat to others. As such, children would be suspended from school for bringing a tiny plastic gun to school or pointing a finger like a gun. It is also important to identify any substantive threats in a timely manner to prevent school violence and ensure a safe learning environment. When a student's threat does not indicate a substantive intent to harm anyone, the incident can be resolved without significant disruption to the student's education. Threat Assessment is part of a comprehensive approach.



The Schenectady City School District is committed to providing a safe, secure, orderly, and appropriate environment for learning. This includes the responsibility of ensuring a student's dress, grooming, and overall appearance is safe and does not disrupt or interfere with the educational process. A student's style of dress may reflect individual choice but must be within the constraints of reasonable rules and appropriate standards consistent with an environment that promotes a positive learning atmosphere free of disruptions and distractions.

Students and their parents are responsible for adhering to the district dress code.



**To equitably enforce the district dress code students must follow these guidelines and expectations:**

- a) All students and parents must be notified of the policy at the beginning of each school year.
- b) Clothing, attire, or grooming may not depict or advocate violence, criminal activity, use of alcohol or drugs, pornography, or hate speech.

**Specifically, the following is prohibited:**

- a) Clothing that depicts, advertises, or advocates the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or other controlled substances.
- b) Clothing that depicts pornography, nudity, or sexual acts.
- c) Clothing that depicts hate speech or symbols targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation, or any other protected classification.
- d) Attire (including jewelry) must not pose a threat to the health or safety of any student or staff member.
- e) Students must wear a top with fabric on the front and sides, including opaque (non-see through) fabric over breasts; a bottom that cover the genital, buttocks, and all portions of underwear except the waist band.
- f) Clothing that masks a student's identity is prohibited.
- g) Appropriate footwear must always be worn, specifically, footwear that allows students to walk comfortably through the school and move quickly in the event of an emergency.

**To equitably enforce the district dress code, all students, school staff, teachers and administrators are expected to follow these guidelines:**

- a) All school staff, students, administrators, and parents must be notified of the dress code policy at the beginning of each school year.
- b) If a student's clothing is in violation of the dress code, they will be required to modify their appearance to gain compliance with the policy.
- c) When staff or administrators address a grooming or dress violation, they should present options for obtaining appropriate clothing (ex, school clothing closet). Where possible, students should not be required to wear school-owned replacement garments as a disciplinary measure.
- d) Chronic dress or grooming violations will be subject to further disciplinary actions.
- e) SCSD reserves the right to revisit and make modifications to the dress code if necessary.
- f) Enforcement must accommodate clothing worn by students as an expression of religious beliefs (head scarves, for example) and worn by students with disabilities (protective helmets, for example).

# PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES (PED) (Policy #7318)

SCSD has created a policy which is alignment with Governor Hochul's 2025-26 cellphone policy which creates a statewide standard for *distraction-free schools* in New York.

## I. Cell Phone Policy: A Community Approach

As we advance into a more technologically integrated world, the use of cellphones and other digital devices in educational settings has become a topic of significant discussion. At the Schenectady City School District (SCSD), we recognize the immense benefits technology can offer in enhancing educational experiences and preparing students for a future where digital literacy is paramount. However, we also understand the potential challenges and distractions that come with it. To balance these aspects effectively, we are implementing an updated comprehensive Personal Electronic Device (PED) policy designed to support both academic achievement and personal development. The district has created this policy to govern the possession and use of personal electronic devices on school premises, at school-sponsored activities and on school transportation.

This policy promotes innovative and appropriate technology use in education, allowing educators to use cell phones for educational purposes and providing students with opportunities to use devices, as directed by the educators in the school and guided by the implementation plan and school protocols. As a district and school community, this policy implementation will take a collective effort of all of our stakeholders, including but not limited to:

- **Students:** We ask students to embrace this policy as a means of fostering a more productive learning environment and to use their cellphones responsibly when permitted.
- **Parent/Guardian and Staff Involvement:** Parents/guardians and staff will play a crucial role in reinforcing the policy. We encourage parents/guardians to discuss responsible cell phone use with their children and to support our efforts in maintaining a focused learning environment.
- **Staff members:** will monitor cell phone use and address any issues that arise, ensuring that the policy is implemented fairly and effectively.
- **Administrators and Central Administration:** Administrators will oversee the implementation of this policy. They are responsible for communicating the policy and expectations, **supporting staff members**, monitoring its effectiveness, and adjusting as needed.
- **The School Board of Education** is responsible for ensuring the district adheres to the fidelity of the policy. This includes monitoring and checking the effectiveness of its implementation and ensuring alignment with the policy.

## II. Definition of Personal Electronic Devices

For the purposes of this policy **“Personal Electronic Device”** means a privately owned device that is used for audio, video, or text communication or any other type of computer-like instrument.

**This includes but is not limited to:**

- Existing and emerging mobile communication systems and smart technologies (cellular phones, iPhones, Smartwatches, Smartphones, AirPods, internet-enabled phones, etc.)
- Handheld and portable entertainment systems (video gaming systems, iPods, AirPods, wireless accessories, iPads, etc.)
- Current or emerging wireless handheld technologies or portable information technology systems that can be used for word processing, wireless internet access, image capture/recording, sound recording, and information transmitting/receiving/storing, etc.

# PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES (PED) (Policy #7318)

### III. Usage of Receptacles

Our school district utilizes receptacles to store personal electronic devices during the school day, for students, grades PreK-12. Our district practices addendum outlines the guidelines and expectations of how our receptacle usage is defined and applied.

#### A. Cell Phone Policy for Afterschool Activities and Athletics

All afterschool personnel are required to adhere to the established Code of Character, Conduct, and Support.

### IV. Responsibilities for Personal Electronic Devices

#### A. STUDENTS:

**Student Responsibility:** Students are responsible for the security of their personal electronic devices (PEDs). They may possess PEDs on their person, but they must be powered off and placed in receptacles. The district is not liable to any student or their parent/guardian for any claims of loss, theft, damage, unauthorized use of these devices or costs of any kind arising out of or related to the use or possession of the student's electronic device.

- a. Personal electronic devices shall not be used in any way that threatens, humiliates, harasses or intimidates students, school personnel or visitors, or otherwise violates district policies and regulations or local, state or federal laws. Students are prohibited from sending, sharing, viewing, or possessing pictures, text messages, emails or other material of a sexually explicit nature on their personal electronic devices while on school premises, at school-sponsored activities, or on school transportation. Further, students are prohibited from using the camera, video or recording functions of their personal electronic devices on school premises or at school-sponsored activities where another student or individual has an expectation of privacy, including, but not limited to, locker rooms, counseling sessions, restrooms, dressing areas, etc.

**Confiscation and Consequence:** In addition to the interventions and actions described below, a student who does not adhere to the policy may have their personal electronic device confiscated. Any building staff person who confiscates a PED will hand it to the building administrator immediately. The building administrator will hold the PED until such time as the student's parent or guardian makes an appointment to pick up the item.

#### a. Behavioral Level Consequences

Any infraction of this policy will follow a tiered behavioral level approach as set forth in the district's Code of Character, Conduct and Support.

**Medical Exemptions:** With appropriate documentation from a doctor or medical professional, or as listed within an IEP/504, cell phones are permissible.

**Emergency Situations:** Cellphones may be used for emergency purposes only with prior consent from a teacher, staff member, or school administration.

# PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES (PED) (Policy #7318)

## B. FACULTY & STAFF:

### Cell Phone Use:

**Educational Purposes:** Staff members are permitted to use cellphones only for educational purposes within the classroom or during instructional time. This includes using cellphones as part of lessons, accessing educational resources, or facilitating learning activities.

**Emergency Situations:** Staff may use their cellphones for emergencies, such as personal health concerns or urgent family matters, ensuring that this use does not disrupt the educational environment.

**During Lunch:** Staff may use their cellphones during lunch and other non-instructional periods, respecting the need to maintain a professional atmosphere and avoiding distractions that could impact their responsibilities.

### Roles Requiring Cell Phones

Certain roles within the school require cell phone use due to the nature of their responsibilities. These include but are not limited to:

**Administrators:** Principals, Assistant Principals, Superintendent and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT).

**Support Personnel:** Counselors, Psychologists, Social Workers, Nurses

**Safety Personnel:** CEO's

\*These individuals are allowed to use cellphones for professional duties, emergencies, and essential communication as part of their roles. Our cell phone policy aims to harness the advantages of **various** technologies while safeguarding our students' educational experience and well-being. By working together, we can ensure that technology serves as a beneficial tool rather than a distraction, helping our students succeed academically and grow personally. Thank you for your support and cooperation as we implement this policy and continue to strive for excellence in education.



Technology plays a crucial role in today's world. By providing students a technology rich environment in school, they can better prepare for the challenges and opportunities they will encounter in college or the workforce. With increased access to digital tools, resources, and information, students become more engaged and take greater ownership of their learning.

The Schenectady City School District's Chromebook program is focused on equipping students with the necessary tools and resources to be successful in the modern world. Integrating technology seamlessly throughout the educational program is essential for delivering quality education. While technology immersion is important, it does not diminish the vital role of teachers. Instead, it serves as a powerful tool to expand learning opportunities for our students. Technology enables personalized learning, allowing students to receive additional support or greater challenges based on their individual needs.

The policies and procedures outlined in this document apply to all devices used in the Schenectady City School District, including Chromebooks and other devices provided by the district. Teachers may establish additional requirements for device usage in their specific classrooms.

## **Chromebook Use & Chromebook Damage and Replacement**

### **1.1 Chromebook Use**

Chromebooks are provided for all students to use in school. Students will learn about the Chromebook, review this handbook and take part in digital literacy training throughout the school year.

If a student needs a device to use at home for educational purposes, the student and parent/guardian may complete the Technology Loan Agreement. This agreement allows families to opt in for their student to use and care for a device at home throughout the school year.

### **1.2 Chromebook Damage and Replacement**

Students are responsible for the general care of any Chromebook that they have been issued for use in school or at home. If the Chromebook and/or any accessories are damaged or lost after being assigned to a student, a fee will be assessed to cover the repair or replacement of the device(s).

If a student fails to return a home loaned Chromebook at the end of the school year or upon termination of enrollment at SCSD, the student will pay the Chromebook and/or accessory replacement fees.

Waiving or modifying fees based on economic hardships or other extenuating circumstances is at the discretion of the building administration.

### **Chromebook fees:**

- \$30 if the Chromebook sustains damage
- \$25 for unreturned or damaged chargers
- \$50 if the Chromebook is lost or damaged beyond repair

## **2. Taking Care of Chromebooks**

All students are responsible for the general care of the Chromebook they have been issued for both in school use and as part of the loan program. Students who have Chromebooks that are broken or are not working properly must notify their teacher and/or the main office immediately. These devices will be taken to the Technology Department for an evaluation.

Students who have caused damage to multiple Chromebooks in the same academic year may be prohibited from continuing to use District devices.

### **2.1 General Precautions**

- **The Chromebook is school property**, and all users will follow this policy and the SCSD Acceptable Use Policy for technology.
- Clean the screen with a soft, dry cloth or anti-static cloth (no cleansers).
- Cords and cables must be inserted carefully into the Chromebook to prevent damage.
- Chromebooks must remain free of any writing, drawing, stickers, labels, or any other personal decoration.
- Chromebooks must never be left in an unlocked locker, unlocked car or any unsupervised area.
- Students are responsible for keeping their Chromebook's battery charged for school each day. Chromebooks that are loaned for home use should be plugged in each night to allow for a full charge in the morning.

### **2.2 Carrying Chromebooks**

The guidelines below should be followed:

- When carrying the Chromebook in a case/backpack, take caution when placing other items (notebooks, books, lunch box, etc.) to avoid putting too much pressure and weight on the Chromebook screen. The screen is delicate and can crack easily.
- Use caution when placing Chromebooks into bags, to ensure that writing utensils, earbuds, etc., do not slip between the screen and keyboard.

### **2.3 Screen Care**

The Chromebook screen can be damaged if subjected to rough treatment. The screens are particularly sensitive to damage from excessive pressure on them.

- Do not lean on the top of the Chromebook when it is closed.
- Do not place anything near the Chromebook that could put pressure on the screen.
- Clean the screen with a soft, dry cloth or anti-static cloth only.
- Avoid leaving earbuds, pens, pencils, etc., inside the Chromebooks when closing them.
- Do not "bump" the Chromebook against lockers, walls, car doors, floors, etc., because it will eventually break the screen.

### **3. Using Your Chromebook at School**

Chromebooks are intended for use for educational purposes. All students must follow the district Acceptable Use Policy.

#### **3.1 Screensavers/Background Photos**

- Inappropriate media may not be used as a screensaver or background photo.
- Presence of guns, weapons, pornographic materials, inappropriate language, alcohol, drug, gang-related symbols, or pictures, etc., will result in disciplinary actions.
- Device passwords are not to be used.
- 3.2 Sound, Music, Games or Programs
- Sound must be muted or headphones must be used at all times unless permission is obtained from the teacher for instructional purposes.
- All software/apps/music/games must be district approved.

### **4. Managing Your Files & Saving Your Work**

#### **4.1 Saving to the Chromebook/Workspace/Shared Drive**

Students will save and access their work in their Google Drive. If there is a Chromebook or network malfunction, the student should have an immediate conversation with their teacher to come up with an alternate plan to complete assignments.

#### **4.2 Network Connectivity**

The SCSD makes no guarantee that their network will be up and running 100 percent of the time. In the rare case that the network is down, students should communicate with their teachers regarding the expectations for assignments.

### **5. Software on Chromebooks**

#### **5.1 Originally Installed Software**

The software/apps originally installed by SCSD must remain on the Chromebook in usable condition and be easily accessible at all times. From time to time the school may add software applications for use in a particular course. The licenses for this software require that the software be deleted from Chromebooks at the completion of the course. Periodic checks of Chromebooks will be made to ensure that students have not removed required apps.

#### **5.2 Additional Software**

Students are not allowed to load unapproved extensions/apps on their Chromebooks. SCSD will synchronize the Chromebooks so that they contain the necessary extensions/apps for school work. The school does not accept responsibility for the loss of any software or documents deleted due to reformatting or re-imaging.

#### **5.3 Software Upgrades**

Upgrade versions of licensed software/apps are available from time to time. Students may be required to check in their Chromebooks for periodic updates and syncing.

### **6. Protecting and Storing Your Chromebook**

#### **6.1 Chromebook Identification**

Student Chromebooks will be labeled in the manner specified by the school. Chromebooks can be identified in the following ways:

- Record of serial number

- SCSD label

These labels must be visible at all times. Students should report missing or unreadable labels to their teacher or the main office.

## **6.2 Chromebooks Left in Unsupervised Areas**

Under no circumstances should Chromebooks be left in unsupervised areas. Unsupervised areas include but are not limited to the school grounds and campus, the lunchroom, computer labs, locker rooms, unlocked classrooms, restrooms, and hallways. Any Chromebook left in these areas is in danger of being stolen. If a Chromebook is found in an unsupervised area, it will be taken to the Technology Department or the main office. If this becomes a recurring problem, there may be a fine associated with the retrieval of the Chromebook.

## **7. Home Use (Opt in)**

Chromebooks are intended for use for educational purposes at school and at home. All students must follow the district Acceptable Use Policy at all times while using their Chromebook.

### **7.1 Chromebooks Left at Home**

If a student leaves their Chromebook at home, they are responsible for getting the coursework completed as if they had their Chromebook present. Access to loaner devices is not guaranteed.

### **7.2 Chromebook Undergoing Repair**

Loaner devices may be issued to students for the school day when they leave their Chromebooks for repair with the Technology Department.

### **7.3 Charging Your Chromebook's Battery**

Chromebooks must be brought to school each day in fully-charged condition. Students are responsible for charging their Chromebooks each evening.

### **7.4 Home Internet Access**

Students are allowed to access home wireless networks on their Chromebooks.

- Student use of the Chromebook will be subject to the SCSD website filtering software even when accessing materials on a home connection. The filtering software will ONLY affect SCSD registered devices and is in line with the SCSD Acceptable Use Policy.



The Board of Education encourages students to participate in interscholastic athletics. The administration and teachers will abide by this policy when determining student eligibility. Extended day instructional support and expanded learning are not considered as extracurricular activities.

The Director of Athletics is solely responsible for disseminating the Athletic eligibility list to all staff on game day or day of contest. In the event the Director of Athletics is absent, the Assistant Superintendent of Innovation, Equity and Engagement will assign the task to a trained substitute. The Director of Athletics shall determine eligibility by 12:00 p.m. on event days.

**Effective the second marking period of the 2023-2024 school year and thereafter, any student wishing to participate in interscholastic athletics at the high school must:**

- Be enrolled in the District as a bona fide student for at least 15 consecutive school days. With regard to postseason competition, the student must be enrolled for at least 15 consecutive school days prior to the start of the postseason events. To the extent that this provision conflicts with state or federal law, this provision will not apply to students in temporary housing (homeless students and students in foster care).
- Be registered in a minimum of three regular courses plus physical education (to be in compliance with the New York State Public High School Athletic Association requirements).
- Be meeting the physical education requirement, and passing physical education as of the last report card.
- Physical education is important to help students achieve and maintain physical fitness. Maintain at least an 85% average daily attendance in order to maintain eligibility. The only exception for the 85% standard is for a documented excusable absence as per district attendance policy. The average daily attendance rate does not include unresolved attendance data.

**All students must have earned a minimum of 4.5 credits or units of study during the previous school year in order to participate in high school interscholastic athletics at the high school level.**

- Students not meeting the 4.5 credit/unit standard by the end of August of a school year may request an appeal to the Director of Athletics.
- The Director of Athletics in consultation with an academic support team comprised of teachers, counselors, coaches, social workers, assistant principals and building principal, will review the student's academic progress and consider developing a contract for the following school year, as follows:
- The contract must minimally include enrollment in credit recovery courses, if applicable, and clearly defined intervention strategies that will support the specific needs of the student.
- The contract must be reviewed with the student and their parent/guardian on a quarterly basis.
- Each quarter, a review of the current report card must be completed and additional strategies to address deficiencies must be incorporated into the contract.
- The contract will remain in effect for the entire school year.
- If a student does not cooperate and comply with the contract or does not make sufficient academic progress, the contract may be revised or revoked. If the contract is revoked, the student will no longer be eligible for participation in interscholastic athletics for the remainder of that school year.

# INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

# Continued...

- Students not meeting the 85% attendance requirement based on the Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy (#7110) may request an appeal to the Director of Athletics.
- The Director of Athletics and student support staff will review the student attendance record and consider whether or not to approve the appeal. If approved, the student will be placed on an attendance contract for the entire school year.
- The Director of Athletics will ensure the student support staff meet with the student every five weeks to monitor improvement.
- If the student does not demonstrate improvement, the student will no longer be eligible for participation in the above extracurricular activities and interscholastic athletics for the remainder of the school year.
- Students must be in attendance the day of their competition.

Beginning with the 2023-2024 school year & thereafter, all students must have maintained 85% attendance based upon the Comprehensive [Student Attendance Policy \(7110\)](#) from the previous year.

## Behavior Eligibility for Participation in Extracurricular Activities and Interscholastic Athletics

- A student may be suspended from participating in interscholastic athletics, for any violation of the District Code of Character, Conduct, & Support, to include fighting at games/activities.
- Any student placed on In-School Suspension (ISS) or given an Out-Of-School Suspension may not practice and/or play in games for the duration of the suspension (including over weekends). If a student is suspended, either In-School or Out-of-School, the student must sit out at least one game as applicable. (If the student-athlete has a contest during their suspension, this would count as the one game they must sit. They would not be penalized twice).
- If a student has received two (2) Out-of-School Suspensions in a semester prior to or during a sports season, the student will be ineligible to participate in interscholastic athletics for the remainder of the season.

A copy of this policy will be distributed to all student athletes, and their parents/guardians; electronic access will be provided to professional staff and coaches. It will also be posted on the district website. This policy will be explained to participants in extracurricular activities and interscholastic sports prior to participation.

# REPORTING VIOLATIONS

All SCSD personnel who are authorized to impose disciplinary sanctions are expected to do so in a prompt, respectful, fair, and lawful manner. School personnel who are not authorized to impose disciplinary sanctions are expected to promptly report violations of the district's code of character, conduct, and support to their supervisor.

Any student observing another student in possession of a weapon, alcohol, or illegal substance on school property or at a school function is encouraged to report this information immediately to any staff member or administrator. The school principals or designee will consult with local law enforcement regarding violations that constitute a crime.

Notification to law enforcement may be made through the Community Engagement Officer (CEO) assigned to the school district. The District Director of School Climate & safety must also be notified.

## APPEALS PROCESS-SUPERINTENDENT HEARING

If following a superintendent's hearing a student has been found guilty of violating the code of character, conduct, and support, the student's parent or guardian can appeal the decision and penalty. To appeal the superintendent's decision, the parent or guardian must:

- Make the appeal to the Board of Education in writing within 30 days after receiving the written decision from the superintendent.
- Submit the letter to the Schenectady City School District Clerk of the Board (530 Liberty Street)

If the appeal to the Board of Education is denied, the parents or guardian may appeal the decision to the New York State Commission of Education within 30 days from the time the board's decision is received. To do so, the parent or guardian must file and serve a notice of petition, a petition, and any supporting affidavit (s). New evidence may not be submitted in support of an appeal. <https://www.counsel.nysesd.gov/appeals/instruction>

If the petition is denied, the decision can be reviewed by a New York State court.

A student cannot be punished for filing an appeal.

## COMPLAINT PROCEDURES & CHAIN OF CONTACT

Student and parents have the right to file a complaint if they believe there has been a violation of their due process rights.

### PROCESS FOR MAKING A COMPLAINT

1. Any students or parents with a question or concern about a discipline related response, should discuss the concern with the person who made the decision.
2. If the student or parent is not satisfied, a verbal or written complaint should be made to the school principal.
3. If the student or parent is still not satisfied, they should contact the executive director of elementary or secondary schools.
4. If the student or parent is still not satisfied, they should contact the Asst. Superintendent of Student Support Services or the Deputy Superintendent.
5. If the student or parent is still not satisfied after following the above chain of contact, the superintendent should be contacted.

Complaints can be made through "Let's Talk" which is accessible from the district website. Any complaint submitted through Let's Talk will be directed to the appropriate person for handling.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Academic Dishonesty:** Plagiarism, copying another's work, altering records, and cheating by providing, receiving, or viewing answers to quiz or test items or independent assignments; using text, documents, notes, or notebooks during tests without permission from a staff member.

**Arson:** Starting a fire or destruction of property because of starting a fire.

**Behavior Violations:** Student behaviors that are inappropriate in school, unacceptable, Violate the Code of Character, or that warrant response, interventions, and consequences.

**Bomb Threat:** The making of threats or providing false information, in writing, in person, on the phone, including text message or other means, about the presence of explosive materials or devices on school property without cause.

**Bullying:** Repeated intentional acts done willfully, knowingly and with deliberation, by an individual(s), that targets and harms another person physically or emotionally. Bullying is characterized by an imbalance of power between two students.

**Child Pornography:** Sexually explicit images of children younger than 17 years of age.

**Consequence:** A result or response that follows an action.

**Damage to Property:** Damage, destruction of defacement of property belonging to the school or others.

**Dignity Act Coordinator:** An employee designated by the board who ensures full compliance with the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) and is trained to address issues in areas protected by the law. Dignity Act Coordinators manage documentation, processing, actions, and interventions enforcing DASA.

**Discrimination:** Unjust or prejudicial treatment toward any student by a student(s) and/or employee(s) on school property or at a school function including, but not limited to, discrimination based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, sex, or any other protected class.

**Electronic Technology:** Devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, tablets.

**Ethnic Group:** A group of people who identify with each other through a common heritage including language, culture, and often a shared or common religion and/or ideology that stresses ancestry.

**Equity:** Equity refers to fair and just practices and policies that ensure all campus community members can thrive. See board policy: <http://go.boarddocs.com/ny/schenectady/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=C8WPAT63B9C9>

**Gender:** Actual or perceived sex and includes a person's gender identity or expression.

**Gender Expression:** The way in which we express gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, hairstyle, activities, voice, or mannerisms.

**Harassment:** The creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that has or would interfere with a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits or mental, emotional, or physical well-being or threat, intimidation or abuse that cause or would be expected to cause a student to fear for their physical safety.

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# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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**Hazing:** A specific form of harassment among students defined as any humiliating or dangerous activity expected of a student to join a group or be accepted by a formal or informal group, regardless of the student's willingness to participate. Hazing including, but is not limited to, any activity that intimidates or threatens a student with ostracism or adversely affects the health or safety of the student; or any activity that causes or requires the student to perform a task or act that is a violation of state or federal law or district policies/regulations.

**Illegal drug:** A controlled substance (does not include a controlled substance legally possessed or used under the supervision of a licensed health care professional).

**Inciting or participating in an incident of group violence:** Causing or participating in a group altercation or large disruption to the atmosphere of order and discipline in the school (such as a riot).

**Interventions:** Specific programs, strategies, restorative practices, skill-building sessions, and individual and group counseling activities, among other things, that enable students to reflect on behavior, attitudes, needs and feeling; learned replacement behaviors and habits, working through personal obstacles, resolving conflict, and developing goals and plans to get back on track.

**Informal Hearing:** A 5-day suspension with a required parent re-entry meeting, in which student, parent, & administrator meet to review & discuss an incident, consequences, and restorative interventions necessary.

**Inappropriate use of electronic devices:** May include (but not limited to) using computer, tablet, phone, or other electronic device in ways that violate the code of character, conduct, & support (ex. Recording altercations, or accessing other accounts). See electronic policy #7318

**Leveled consequences and interventions:** There are five levels of behaviors and possible responses. Level one aims at responding with strategies in the classroom to teach and correct behaviors (such as unexcused tardies, being caught in a hall sweep, etc.) The consequences intensify as the levels increase. For example, level five behaviors, ones that are dangerous behaviors and/or create risk of injury, can result in more severe consequences such as suspension.

**Parent:** Biological, adoptive, foster parent, guardian, or person of record in parental relation to a student.

**Persistent:** Repeated over a period of days after interventions have been implemented and given ample time to be effective.

**Physical aggression:** Behavior causing or threatening physical harm toward others including, but not limited to, hitting, kicking, biting, and shoving.

**Physical attack on another student or staff without immediate provocation:** An act of physical aggression toward another that is not immediately provoked. Ex. A student or students set upon another student in a forceful, hostile, or aggressive way. Provocation does not include an earlier conflict or verbal disagreement.

**Physical altercation between two or more students:** Physical aggression (use of physical force) between two or more students that may or may not result in injury.

**Physically pushing, hitting, kicking, biting, or scratching another person:** This code is often used more with grades K-5. Reflects a behavior incident that does not result in injury of others.

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# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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**Race:** Race was constructed as a hierachal human-grouping system, generating racial classifications to identify, distinguish and marginalize some groups across nations, regions, & the world. Race divides human populations into groups often based on physical appearance, social factors, and cultural backgrounds.

National Human Genome Research Institute (.gov)

**Racial Harassment:** A negative opinion or verbal expression toward an individual or group of persons who possess common physical characteristics (color of skin, eyes, hair, and facial features genetically transmitted by descent and heredity) that distinguish them as a distinct division of humankind, based on these physical characteristics.

**Reckless Endangerment:** Conduct that creates a substantial risk or serious physical injury or death to another person.

**Religion:** Either religious or spiritual belief or preference.

**Religious Practice:** Attending worship services, praying, wearing religious garb or symbols, displaying religious objects, adhering to certain dietary rules, proselytizing or other forms of religious expression or refraining from certain activities.

**Restorative Practices:** An approach to resolving conflict and preventing harm. Restorative approaches enable those who have been harmed to convey the impact of the harm to those responsible, and for those responsible to acknowledge this impact and take steps to make it right.

**Sending, receiving, or displaying offensive material via electronic devices:** Examples include sending or receiving pornography, offensive harassing content, or acts of violence.

**Sexual Offense-Reportable:** Any act committed by a person 10 years of age or older which would constitute a felony under Article 130 of the Penal Law, taking into consideration the developmental capacity of the person to form the intent to commit such act, and where the school has referred the person to the police for the act reported.

**School Function:** Any school-sponsored extracurricular event or activity. This includes any event, occurring on or off school property, sanctioned or approved by the district including, but not limited to, off-site athletic events, school dances, plays, musical productions, field trips or other district-sponsored trips.

**School Property:** Outside grounds, all structures, and any space within any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, parking lot or land contained within the real property boundary line of a public elementary or secondary school.

**Serious Bodily Injury:** Bodily injury which involves a substantial risk of death, extreme physical pain, protracted and obvious disfigurement or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty.

**Tardiness:** Arriving late to school or class.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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**Theft:** Taking or attempting to take property of another person or institution without permission or knowledge of the owner, with the intent to deprive the owner of its use. Robbery includes obtaining or attempting to obtain money, goods, services, or information from another by physical force or violence, coordinated violence or intimidation using a dangerous instrument or weapon. Theft, possession, or transfer of stolen goods includes the act of possessing or transferring the property of another without the consent of the owner.

**Threat Assessment:** A process used to evaluate the risk posed by a student or another person, typically as a response to an actual or perceived threat concerning behavior.

**Threats to School:** Based on threat assessment, credibility and intention determine severity of consequence.

**Trespassing:** Being on school property without permission, including while suspended.

**Truancy:** Being absent from school or class without a legal excuse/reason.

**Using or Possessing:** Consuming alcohol, drugs, or inhalants or in possession of these substances on school property or at school functions.

**Threat Assessment:** A process used to evaluate the risk posed by a student or another person, typically as a response to an actual or perceived threat concerning behavior.

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**Trespassing:** Being on school property without permission, including while suspended.

**Truancy:** Being absent from school or class without a legal excuse/reason.

**Using or Possessing:** Consuming alcohol, drugs, or inhalants or in possession of these substances on school property or at school functions.

**New York State Ed Vadir Glossary:**

<https://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/ssae/schoolsafety/vadir/glossary201718.html>

## SOURCES

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American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

Alliance for Excellent Education

Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines, Dewey Cornell

Hemphill S.A. & Hargreaves T. School Suspension: A Resource for Teachers and School Administrators, Centre for Adolescent Youth

Montgomery County Public Schools Code of Conduct, 2017-2018

Restorative Practices Handbook by Costello, Wachtel and Wachtel

Syracuse City School District Code of Conduct, 2016-2017

Learning for Justice, Code of Conduct, A Guide to Responsive Discipline