



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA



Code of Conduct 2023-2024

**Superintendent
Tony B. Watlington, Sr., Ed.D.**

Table of Contents

School District of Philadelphia Office Directory	3
Introduction to the Code of Conduct	4
Community Member Expectations and Responsibilities	4
Digital Learning Expectations	5
Visitors to Campus	6
Dress Code Expectations	6
Attendance Expectations	6
School Visitor Expectations	9
Student/Guardian Rights and Supports	10
Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination	13
Investigations	16
Student Behavior and Discipline	16
Discipline for Students with Disabilities	19
Student Transition Center	22
Philadelphia Police Department Referrals and Diversion	24
Discipline Continued - Behavior Matrix	25

School District of Philadelphia Directory

School District of Philadelphia Office Directory	
School District of Philadelphia Welcome Center 440 North Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19130 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM No Appointment Needed	215-400-4000 English/Spanish Speakers 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM Additional Language Hotlines: philasd.org/face/contact ASK@philasd.org
Family and Community Engagement	215-400-4180
Climate and Culture	215-400-4870
Re-Engagement Center	215-400-6700
Diverse Learners	215-400-4170
Student Placement and Enrollment	215-400-4290
Student Rights and Responsibilities	215-400-4830
Transportation	215-400-4350
Prevention and Intervention	215-400-4930
Student Health Services	215-400-4920
School Safety	215-400-6000
Other important Contact Information and Resources	
Pennsylvania Safe Schools Advocate	215-656-5381
Bullying Hotline	215-400-SAFE (7233)
Child Abuse Hotline	1-800-932-0313
Suicide and Crisis Lifeline	Dial 988
Philadelphia Domestic Abuse Hotline	1-866-723-3014
LGBTQIA Resources	healthymindsphilly.org
Violence Reduction/Victim Resources	cap4kids.org
Mental Health, Trauma & Self Care Resources	philasd.org/prevention

Introduction to the Code of Conduct

The School District of Philadelphia is committed to creating and maintaining well-resourced and safe school environments conducive to teaching and learning. We strive to develop meaningful partnerships with parents/guardians and families, so we can work together to encourage academic, social and emotional growth in all of our students. **Our goal is to ensure that all of our students have the necessary resources to graduate and succeed as fully engaged citizens of the world.**

The **purpose of the Code of Conduct** is to: 1) outline clear expectations for all school community members; 2) provide information around student and parent/guardian rights and supports; and 3) equip staff with guidelines for addressing student behavior. The School District of Philadelphia seeks to eliminate inequitable disciplinary practices for black and brown students and therefore the Code of Conduct provides alternatives to exclusionary discipline.

When does the Code of Conduct apply?

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

Community Member Expectations

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

Responsibilities of Everyone

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

Responsibilities of School Staff Members

- Create and maintain a welcoming environment for all students and parents/guardians.
- Share and continually reiterate Code of Conduct expectations for the school community.
- Communicate with and partner with parents/guardians to support their students' school experience.
- Ensure that all students are afforded equitable access to all opportunities at school and are not subject to harassment or disproportionate exclusion from class, consistent with the School District of Philadelphia's commitment to dismantle systemic racism that hinders student achievement.
- Cultivate and maintain a learning environment that leads to academic success.
- Thoroughly investigate alleged Code of Conduct violations.
- Respond to Code of Conduct violations with interventions and support to address student behavior.
- Report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the Child Abuse Hotline.
- Maintain confidentiality of student records.

Parents/Guardians

- Support the policies of The School District of Philadelphia, Code of Conduct and school handbook.
- Respect the rights of others, including all students and staff.
- Emphasize the importance of being prepared for school and adhering to school norms.
- Communicate student needs and concerns, and respond to school outreach regarding student needs, concerns and successes.
- Respect all members of the school community and comply with school norms.

Students

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

Digital Learning Expectations

It is **not** expected that schools will return to virtual learning. However, if virtual learning returns for any reason, The School District of Philadelphia will continue to strive to provide a healthy, safe, and positive learning environment for all of our students. To promote these conditions, school community members will still be held to the expectations that are outlined in this document. **Additionally, the guidance below should be followed when using any technology as a student in the School District of Philadelphia to promote cyber safety and respect for all community members.**

The safety of our students is of highest priority to the School District. We encourage parents/guardians to review responsible and safe usage of technology with their children. For example, child(ren) should be reminded not to share their passwords, their location, or any personal information on the internet. Additionally, some internet sites have content that is inappropriate for children so parents/guardians are encouraged to regularly monitor the websites their children are visiting.

If parents/guardians identify a security and/or safety problem with the school computers and/or educational platform, they should notify a school administrator (i.e., principal, assistant principal) immediately.

Students should also practice internet safety and can visit the [Office of Educational Technology](#) for resources.

Dress Code Expectations

Students are expected to follow their school's dress code so that their appearance does not constitute a health or safety hazard. School principals must determine, in collaboration with their school community, what the uniform policy will be and then communicate that decision before the start of the school year. For information regarding a school's dress code, please consult the school's handbook.

The following guidelines must apply, regardless of a school's dress code:

- Principals may declare "spirit" or other themed days and allow students to wear school spirit shirts, or schedule dress-up days (when school pictures are scheduled). They may also allow students to wear other attire for extracurricular activities.

- A dress code violation shall not result in exclusion from the classroom environment.
- Nothing in the Code of Conduct restricts or bans students from wearing religious garb. Parents with questions regarding religious dress are encouraged to discuss them with the school principal.
- Students have the right to dress in accordance with their stated gender identity and/or expression within the constraints of the school's dress code.
- Students who do not have access to the resources to comply with the school's dress code should discuss their extenuating circumstances with their school counselor.

Attendance Expectations

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

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

Pennsylvania Department of Education regulations state that students have a legal right to attend school until the age of twenty-one (21). For further guidance, please visit the Office of Student Enrollment and Placement website.

During the time that a student is of school age, they are entitled to attend the public schools in The School District of Philadelphia. Students who turn twenty-one (21) during the school term are entitled to finish out the school year. Parents/guardians are expected to:

- Ensure that their student(s) between the ages of six (6) and eighteen (18) are enrolled in school and attend school regularly, on time, and for the entire school day.
- Make school attendance a priority and emphasize the importance of showing up to school every day, prepared to participate and learn.
- Provide the school with current contact information (address, phone, email) at the beginning of each school year and update the information with the school whenever there are changes.
- Schedule appointments and family vacations outside of school hours or on days when schools are closed whenever possible.
- Ensure that their student(s) receives the necessary student health examinations and immunizations.
- Provide a written note for every absence, late arrival and early dismissals, per policy.
- Participate in school attendance improvement conferences for their student(s), to improve daily student attendance, when necessary.
- Communicate with school staff whenever there are challenges that may be impacting attendance.

Excused/Lawful Absence

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

- Obtaining professional health care or therapy service rendered by a licensed practitioner
 - Upon written request by a parent/guardian, a student may be excused during school hours for the purpose of obtaining professional health care or therapy service only if the following requirements are met:
 - The health or therapeutic services are to be rendered by licensed practitioners.
 - It is not practical or possible for the student to receive the services outside of school hours.
 - The time of necessary absence from school involves a minimum of interference with the student's regular program of studies.
- Illness, including if a student is dismissed by designated District staff during school hours for health-related reasons
- Quarantine
- Recovery from accident
- Required court appearance
- Death in family
- Educational trip/tour if the following conditions are met:
 - The person in parental relation submits the documentation required for excusal prior to the absence, within the appropriate time frame.
 - The student's participation has been approved by the Superintendent or principal.
 - The adult directing and supervising the tour or trip is acceptable to the person in parental relation.
- College tours, trade school tours, career and technical training program tours, community college tours, or tours of other non-District schools, with prior approval.
 - The District may limit the number and duration of non-school-sponsored educational tours or trips for which excused absences may be granted to a student during the school year.
- Observance of a religious holiday observed by a bona fide religious group, upon prior written request from the person in parental relation.
- Out-of-school suspension
- Family Emergency (An unexpected, serious event that is outside of the control of the student's family)
 - Requires parental note explaining the emergency received within 3 school days of the student's return. School staff will evaluate if the situation constitutes a family emergency.
- Participation in a project sponsored by a statewide or countywide 4-H, Future Farmers of America (FFA), or combined 4-H and FFA group, upon prior written request.
- Participation in a musical performance in conjunction with a national veterans' organization or incorporated unit, as defined in law, for an event or funeral. The national veterans' organization or incorporated unit must provide the student with a signed excuse, which shall include the date, location, and time of the event or funeral. The student shall furnish the signed excuse to the school prior to being excused from school.
- Other urgent reasons that may reasonably cause a student's absence, as well as circumstances related to homelessness and foster care.

Temporary Excusals

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

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

*As outlined in the [204 Attendance Policy](#) which can be found on the [Attendance and Truancy](#) website.

Unexcused/Unlawful Absences

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

Parental Notice of Absences (Written Note)

- Pursuant to the District’s attendance policy, written excuse notes explaining the absence must be given to the school within **three (3) days** upon the student’s return to school from an absence.
 - Contact the student’s school to verify ways excuse notes may be submitted.
 - Excuse notes must be given to the school within **three (3) days** upon the student’s return to school. If the note is not submitted to the school within the required time frame, the day(s) may not be excused.
 - Excuse notes must include a valid telephone number or other means of contact for verification purposes.
- All absences resulting in a total of three (3) or more consecutive days due to illness will require a written excuse note by a licensed healthcare provider. *Excuse notes from a healthcare provider may also be submitted in lieu of a parent note for any absence.*
- For absences that do not total three (3) consecutive days, parents may submit a written excuse note stating the reason for the absence.
- When a student has been absent due to illness, excused with a parent note, totaling eight (8) days (cumulative), all subsequent absences may require a written excuse note from a licensed healthcare provider.

Responses to Non-Attendance (Truancy)

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

If the student continues to accumulate additional unexcused absences after issuance of the notice, the parent/guardian and student will be invited to attend a **School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC)** where a **School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP)** will be created in order to discuss the student’s absences, identify barriers and develop meaningful strategies in an effort to improve attendance with or without additional services.

The parent/guardian and student must be invited to this conference in advance. Neither the student nor the parent/guardian shall be required to participate, although it is highly recommended. The SAIC shall occur even if the parent/guardian declines to participate or fails to attend the scheduled conference.

If the student’s attendance does not improve after implementation and progress monitoring of the SAIP, and the student has accrued ten (10) or more unexcused absences, the student may be referred and scheduled for a **Regional Truancy Court hearing**, in order to prevent, address, and reduce chronic truant behavior. At that time, a truancy provider will contact the parent/guardian and attempt to engage with the family; extending case management services in support of addressing barriers to attendance.

The student and parent/guardian will be required to attend truancy court and the parent/guardian must comply with the truancy court order. The court order may include a referral for services. If the student's attendance does not improve at the Regional Truancy Court level, the case may be referred to Family Court for more intensive services, where a judge has the authority to adjudicate the student dependent and assign the case to the Department of Human Services for more intensive services.

Suspension from school or transfer to an alternative education setting is not a permissible response to truancy.

School Visitor Expectations

Parents/guardians are encouraged to be an active participant in their student's education. Visits to schools should be scheduled in advance whenever possible. To ensure that all of our buildings are safe and successful learning environments, **all visitors, whether they have scheduled a visit or not**, must first report to the main office to sign in, state the reason for their visit, present photo identification (if possible), and receive authorization from a school administrator to proceed with the visit. School administrators cannot guarantee a meeting at the time of an unscheduled visit. In the event that school administrators are not able to meet with a visiting parent/guardian during an unscheduled visit, the school will reach out **within 2 school days** to schedule a meeting.

When visiting school property, parents/guardians are expected to:

- Support the policies of The School District of Philadelphia, Code of Conduct and school handbook.
- Respect the rights of others, including students and staff.
- Model appropriate behavior for your student.
- Respect all members of the school community and comply with school norms.
- Refrain from all abusive and profane language.
- Refrain from all physical confrontation and refrain from encouraging/inciting physical confrontation.
- Refrain from bringing weapons of any kind onto school property. Bringing weapons of any kind onto school property will result in an immediate exclusion.

Parents/guardians who do not comply with community members expectations addressed above may be excluded from the school for three (3) months, or the duration of the year depending on the circumstances. Exclusions may only be made by written exclusion letter issued from the school to the parent. Where possible, a written warning letter will be issued prior to the exclusion letter, notifying the parent/guardian of behavior that has not yet warranted an exclusion but may in the future if the behavior is repeated. However, there are circumstances in which extremely disruptive or violent behavior will warrant immediate exclusion. During the exclusionary period, the excluded parent/guardian will not be able to enter school property without an appointment approved by school administration. Schools may, at their discretion, meet with excluded parents virtually rather than permitting the parent onto school grounds by appointment. The full exclusion letter protocol is on the [Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) website.

Student and Guardian Rights and Supports

The Office of Family and Community Engagement

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

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

Request for Special Education Evaluation

A school professional may **recommend that a student be evaluated to determine if they have a disability**. Parents/guardians may also contact the student's teacher or another school administrator to request an evaluation. The request should be made in writing, but will be accepted verbally. Once the request is made, the school will respond within 10 days. The school will either issue a "Permission to Evaluate" (PTE) or a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP) to explain, in writing, why the evaluation request is denied. For questions, please contact the Special Education Compliance Monitor assigned to your student's school.

Request for 504 Service Plan

A parent/guardian can request for their student to have a 504-service plan. **A student who does not qualify for special education services under IDEA may qualify for services under Section 504 (a civil rights law) if they have a mental or physical impairment that is shown to substantially limit their educational performance.** The request should be made in writing and the parent/guardian should include any relevant medical records along with recommendations for specific services or accommodations the parent/guardian believes the student needs. These requests can be provided to the student's teacher, the counselor, or another school administrator.

Request for Language Access

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

Students Experiencing Homelessness

The District adheres to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act which ensures immediate enrollment and educational stability for students experiencing homelessness. Homelessness is defined

as anyone lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes students who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason (known as doubled up or couch surfing); living temporarily in motels, parks or campgrounds; living in a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a sleeping accommodation by human beings; living in cars, abandoned buildings or substandard housing or similar situations; and refugee or migrant if they are living in circumstances like those described above.

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

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

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

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

Students in Foster Care

A student in foster care will remain in their school of origin (the school where the student was enrolled at the time of placement), unless a determination is made that it is not in their best interest to attend that school. If a student in foster care has experienced a change in placement, a **Best Interest Determination (BID)** meeting will be held to determine if the student should remain in the school of origin or if they should transition to a new school. Foster parents and/or foster care workers should not make any changes to enrollment for students who are in foster care without a BID meeting being held first. For more information, contact Foster Care Services by email: fostercare@philasd.org or by phone: 215-400-4830.

Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students

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

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

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

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

Religious Practices

Upon written parent/guardian request to the school, students may be excused for the following religious practices:

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

Parent/Guardian Appeals

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

- **Disciplinary Hearing Decisions-** Decisions made pursuant to a disciplinary hearing (see page 18).
- **Homelessness Designation-** Decisions regarding whether a student is experiencing homelessness ("McKinney-Vento eligible").
- **Exclusion Letters-** Decisions made that exclude parents/guardians from a school building, for a specified amount of time, as a result of behavior that violates the Code of Conduct.
- **Bullying/Harassment Findings-** Findings of an investigation into allegations of bullying, harassment and/or discrimination.
- **Decisions related to a Title IX Formal Complaint:** Decisions made related to a Title IX Formal Complaint, including, Dismissal of a Title IX Formal Complaint and the Determination for a Title IX Formal Complaint.
- **School Selection-** School assignment eligibility made through the annual school selection process.

More information on the appeals process can be found on the [Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) website.

Victim Services

If a student is the victim of a school related incident, victim services can be sought by contacting the Pennsylvania Office of Safe Schools Advocate: 215-656-5381 or RA-OSSAPhiladelphia@pa.gov. You can also visit the [Office of Safe Schools Advocate](#) website.

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

Expunging Records for Expelled Students

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

School Safety Officer Complaint Process

This procedure is intended to ensure that all students and parents/guardians have a process to submit complaints pertaining to the conduct of School Safety Officers (SSO) and that the complaint process is accessible to all, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability status.

The complaint process shall be used by any student or parent/guardian of the School District of Philadelphia to report an incident that pertains to the conduct of an SSO. It may be used to document information regarding SSO misconduct. **Families may file a complaint on the [Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) website.**

Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination

Bullying

The District recognizes the negative impact that bullying has on student health, welfare, and safety and on the learning environment at school. The District also recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, and detracts from a safe environment. **The District defines bullying as an intentional electronic, written, verbal, nonverbal, psychological or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in and/or outside a school setting, that is severe, persistent, or pervasive** and has the effect of doing any of the following:

1. Substantially interfering with a student's education
2. Creating a threatening school environment
3. Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school

Bullying is further characterized by the following three (3) criteria:

1. It is aggressive behavior or intentional harm doing
2. It is carried out repeatedly over time
3. It occurs between people where there is an imbalance of power (i.e., physical strength, mental capacity, popularity, or social skills)

Bullying Prevention

Research on bullying reveals that prevention efforts should occur at multiple levels. The first and best prevention is an overall positive climate that includes: 1) clear expectations for behavior; 2) school and classroom systems and procedures that are implemented with fidelity to maintain order; 3) evidence-based

schoolwide programming known to support relationships and social-emotional learning; and 4) regular community meetings or community-building circles.

Classroom-based community-building meeting or circles are powerful strategies for helping students develop empathy and the ability to appreciate and understand differences.

Harassment

It is the School District of Philadelphia's policy to maintain an educational environment in which harassment including sexual harassment, sexual assault and sexual violence in any form is not tolerated. **The District defines harassment as verbal, nonverbal, written, graphic or physical conduct relating to an individual's known or perceived race, color, ethnicity, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, English language proficiency, veteran status, disability, or other protected classification.**

Harassment includes unwelcome conduct such as graphic, written, electronic, verbal, or nonverbal acts including offensive jokes, slurs, epithets, and name-calling; ridicule or mockery; insults or put-downs; offensive objects or pictures; physical assaults or threats; intimidation; sexual misconduct; or other conduct that may be harmful or humiliating or interfere with a person's school or school-related performance when:

1. Such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive and;
2. A reasonable person in the complainant's position would find that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment such that it deprives or adversely interferes with or limits an individual or group of the ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or opportunities offered by a school.

Harassment does not have to include the intent to harm, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents.

Discrimination

The District is committed to maintaining schools that are spaces with inclusive climates and that support the social, emotional, and mental health and well-being of all students, therefore, discrimination is not tolerated. **The District defines discrimination as treating individuals differently based on a protected classification including race, color, ethnicity, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, English language proficiency, veteran status, disability, or other protected classification.** A single incident of discrimination may implicate more than one protected class.

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

The School District's policy of non-discrimination extends to all other legally protected classifications:

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended (ADA), is a federal law prohibiting discrimination against individuals with disabilities and, together with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), ensures to deaf and hard-of-hearing students, parents, staff, and community members the right of equal access to services and accommodations provided by the School District of Philadelphia through enhanced communications.

Parents/Guardians and Authorized Visitors

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

Title IX

Title IX is a federal law that prohibits sex and gender-based discrimination. In line with federal regulations (Title IX), the district defines Title IX sexual harassment as any instance of quid pro quo harassment by a school's employee; any unwelcome conduct that a reasonable person would find so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it denies a person equal educational access; any instance of sexual assault (as defined in the Clery Act), dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking (as defined in the Violence Against Women Act).

Examples of potential Title IX Sexual Harassment violations are:

1. Bullying or Harassment based on sex or gender identity or expression
2. Bullying or Harassment based on Pregnant or Parenting status
3. Bullying or harassment in the form of:
 - a. Comments, threats, gestures, or rumors of a sexual nature
 - b. Sharing/showing images/videos of a sexual nature
 - c. Non-consensual sex acts and sexual violence

Such conduct must have taken place during a district education program or activity and against a person in the United States to qualify as sexual harassment subject to Title IX regulations.

Not all unwelcome sexual conduct meets the definition of Title IX sexual harassment. Conduct that does not meet this definition might be considered harassment as defined in the Behavior Matrix of the Code of Conduct.

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

Inquiries related to students:

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

Inquiries related to employees:

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

Reporting

Any school community member can report bullying, harassment and/or discrimination and all reports will be investigated. **There are numerous ways to make a report:**

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

Investigations

The School District of Philadelphia takes all violations of the Code of Conduct seriously. A School Administrator or designee will conduct investigations into any alleged Code of Conduct violation. This includes conduct that occurs off - grounds, virtually, and/or after-hours (including weekends), if the conduct materially impacts the school community (meaning the conduct has a noticeable or considerable impact). Schools should refer to the [investigation stepper](#) for a complete guide on conducting an investigation.

The following guidelines apply to conducting investigations:

- Some alleged conduct may require a notification to the Philadelphia Police Department (schools are to consult with the Office of School Safety for guidance).
- Some alleged conduct may require a notification to Childline as School District employees are mandated reporters.
- If the complaint includes allegations of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or harassment based on sexual orientation, notify the Title IX Coordinator before proceeding with an investigation or discipline.
- Parents/Guardians must be notified of all serious incidents involving their student/s however, schools do not need parent permission to conduct an investigation or obtain statements related to alleged misconduct.
- At times, it may be necessary to share some information about a serious incident with the school community (parents/guardians and students). Schools should conference with the Assistant Superintendent who will reach out to the Office of Communications when considering if a letter/communication will be sent.
- In some cases, Central Office and Employee Labor Relations will lead or be involved in a school's investigation.

Student Behavior and Discipline

The **Behavior Matrix** of the Code of Conduct provides definitions for behaviors that are considered harmful and/or disruptive to the school learning environment and community. The behavior matrix also provides guidance on how to respond to disruptive behaviors. Schools have discretion as to the appropriate level of intervention to use for a given code infraction, in compliance with the allowable interventions in the matrix.

Please see the full behavior matrix and school-based interventions beginning on page 25.

The School District of Philadelphia is committed to improving educational equity and reducing disproportionality in punitive and exclusionary discipline. Research shows that Black youth are three times more likely to be expelled than their white peers and students with disabilities are two times more likely to receive out of school suspensions.

The District's approach to discipline is based in several understandings:

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

Parents/guardians who have any questions or concerns related to discipline are encouraged to contact the school principal and/or Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Suspension Procedures

According to Pennsylvania law, suspension is defined as the denial to a student of the right to attend school and to take part in any school function for any period of up to ten (10) days.

In-School Suspensions

In-school suspension (ISS) is an exclusion from the classroom for disciplinary purposes and allows a student to remain under the direct supervision of school staff. Direct supervision means school staff are physically in the same location as students under their supervision. *All schools may not have the staffing to facilitate in-school suspension and therefore ISS may not be not a disciplinary option.*

Out-of-School Suspensions

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

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

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

- Students must meet with the principal or designee prior to the suspension, unless it is clear that the health, safety, or welfare of the school community is compromised.
- The parent/guardian must be notified and a suspension notice must be issued at the time of the suspension.
- A parent conference should be scheduled before or upon the student's reinstatement to school.
- Schoolwork must be provided for the student if the suspension exceeds four (4) days and should be completed by reinstatement.
- Students must be allowed to re-enter school upon conclusion of their suspension.
- A suspension cannot be coded as an "unexcused absence."
- A student **cannot** be told to stay home from school unless there is a **documented suspension**.

Kindergarten, first and second grade may NOT be suspended unless their actions result in documented serious bodily injury. Schools must consult with their Assistant Superintendent and the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities before issuing a suspension for students in these grades. The student must be referred to the counselor for a meeting to discuss appropriate behavioral health interventions and supports.

Parent/Guardian Conference Procedures

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

- Notice of a conference must be provided to the parent/guardian in writing, in their preferred language and either hand-delivered to the home, sent by mail, email, or by other reasonable means.
- Interpretation will be provided for conferences if requested.
- School administrators will discuss the behavior/incident and offer supportive services as needed.
- Parents/Guardians may request a copy of student records and any evidence.
 - Statements must be redacted before they can be provided to the parent/guardian.

- Photographs and video recordings of incidents may be shown but copies cannot be provided.
- School administrators will inform parents/guardians of any further disciplinary action and provide an overview of due process rights regarding disciplinary action.
- Parents/Guardians are expected to attend all scheduled conferences and school administrators should make every attempt to engage them so that they are able to participate in-person or virtually, as needed.

Disciplinary Hearing Process

Disciplinary Hearing Referrals only apply to students in grades six (6) through twelve (12). Students in kindergarten through grade five (5) cannot be referred for a disciplinary hearing or receive a disciplinary transfer.

Students who are exhibiting a pattern of disruptive behavior(s) and/or committed serious violation(s) of the Code of Conduct may be referred to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for a student disciplinary hearing. Prior to making a referral, schools must complete a Behavior Performance Review (BPR) for general education students to determine if the student is thought to have a disability.

Students referred for a hearing will be suspended and provided the procedures indicated in the suspension and conference procedures section of the Code of Conduct. **Students have the right to return to school pending the outcome of the hearing, unless they receive a safety interim placement.**

Safety Interim Placements

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

Students who are referred for a disciplinary hearing receive full due process to determine whether the student should be removed from their current school placement. Disciplinary hearings will be conducted by an impartial Restorative Discipline Liaison/Hearing officer. Students and parents/guardians participating in the disciplinary hearing process have the following rights:

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

Hearing Decisions

The impartial Restorative Discipline Liaison/Hearing officer will consider all evidence, dialogue in the hearing, and a student's academic, behavior and attendance records when making a decision on the outcome. The outcome can be one of the following:

- Student remains in current school placement due to insufficient evidence.

- Student remains in current school placement with a behavior contract.
- Student remains in current school placement without a behavior contract. In other words, sufficient consequences were already provided.
- Student is laterally transferred to another district or contract-operated school.
- Student is transferred to an Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth (AEDY) placement and will return to a regular education setting once behavioral goals set forth by the program are met.

Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth (AEDY) Program

- Pennsylvania's Alternative Education for Disruptive Youth Program (AEDY) provides a combination of intensive, individual academic instruction and behavior modification counseling in an alternative setting to assist students in returning successfully to the regular education setting.
- AEDY Transition Programs provide education to students in grades 6-12 who have been removed from the regular education setting for certain disciplinary reasons.
 - Students must have a hearing prior to placement unless a safety interim placement is warranted due to a serious situation.
- English Learners (EL) cannot be placed at disciplinary schools that cannot meet their language instruction needs and must be taught by qualified teachers with ESL Teaching Credentials using materials that are appropriate for their ages and levels of proficiency.
- The District and the AEDY Program work with families to create behavioral goals based on their reason for placement and assessments.
 - Students receive a formal periodic review (progress review) before their presumptive exit date.
 - Once behavioral goals are met, students prepare to transition to the regular education setting with a transition plan.
- Placements in AEDY Transition Programs are temporary. Students may only remain until they have met their behavioral goals, unless expelled (see page 21).

Discipline for Students with Disabilities

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

Suspensions

Students Identified as Intellectually Disabled

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

All Other Students Receiving Special Education Services or a 504 Plan

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

Manifestation Determination Process

A Manifestation Determination meeting must be conducted whenever there is a change in placement. For a student identified as intellectually disabled, a one (1) day suspension is considered a change in placement. For

all other students with disabilities, a suspension of ten (10) consecutive days and/or fifteen (15) cumulative days are considered a change in placement, in addition to a disciplinary transfer.

The purpose of the **Manifestation Determination meeting** is to answer two questions: **Was the conduct caused by, or did it have a direct and substantial relationship to, the student's disability? Was the conduct a direct result of the school's failure to implement the student's IEP?**

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

The required steps are as follows:

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

Special Circumstances/45 Day Placements

Schools may request a **45-day placement to an AEDY program**, without regard to the outcome of the Manifestation Determination, if the incident involved one of the **three special circumstances under IDEA**:

1. Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function.
2. Carries a weapon to or possesses a weapon at school, on school premises, or at a school function.
 - a. As defined by IDEA, a weapon is a device, instrument, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury.
 - b. This does not include a pocket knife with a blade of less than 2½ inches in length.
3. Has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function.
 - a. As defined by IDEA, bodily injury that 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.
 - b. SBI but be substantiated through medical documentation submitted to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

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

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

Expulsion Procedures

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

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

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

If a student is expelled by the school board, the parent/guardian of the student has 30 days to provide written documentation that the student is in another educational program. If they are unable to find an alternative educational program, The District will provide for the student's education.

A student who has been permanently expelled from the School District of Philadelphia by the affirmative vote of a majority of the school board may apply for readmission. The school board delegates authority for all readmission decisions to the Superintendent or their designee. Temporarily expelled students need not apply for readmission because they are automatically readmitted to The District at the end of the expulsion period. Readmission decisions are final and not subject to review by appeal to the school board or the courts.

Student Transition Center

The Student Transition Center (STC) serves as a centralized welcome center located at 440 N. Broad Street, for students transitioning back to the School District of Philadelphia from the pathways listed below and are in need of a school assignment after **30+ days**.

Pathways to the Student Transition Center (STC)

- **Return from Residential Treatment Facility (RTF):** students court-ordered or referred by the Department of Human Services, Philadelphia Juvenile Probation, or Community Behavioral Health (CBH).
- **Congregate Care:** dependent or delinquent students from a court-ordered congregate care placement or detention center.
- **Long-term hospitalizations:** students discharged from to a mental/behavioral health in-patient and/or partial hospitalization
- **Resource Home or Shelter:** students returning from a out-of-district placement and placed in a foster home or shelter.
- **AEDY Referrals:** as a result of a disciplinary hearing, students are referred from a disciplinary program.

The STC team serves as a cross-functional team that provides a holistic approach to supporting youth.

STC Services

- **Student Advocacy.** Creating a trusting environment that informs students of their rights to an education within the SDP. Advocacy for appropriate school placements based on student academic, social emotional needs and behavioral needs.
- **Collaboration.** Bridging partnerships with district departments, schools and external resources to create a network of resources for students and families.
- **Promote Student Success.** Promoting student success through case management services, goal planning (attendance, academic, social/emotional, and behavioral), mentoring, and crisis prevention/intervention supports.

Students Convicted or Adjudicated Delinquent for Sexual Assault

While schools have limited authority to impose code of conduct consequences for conduct outside the school setting, Pennsylvania law establishes disciplinary requirements when a student has been convicted or adjudicated delinquent of sexual assault upon another district student. School setting – means in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.

Sexual assault includes any of the following offenses:

- Rape.
- Statutory sexual assault.
- Involuntary deviate sexual intercourse.

- Aggravated indecent assault.
- Indecent assault.

Student Responsibilities

Students who have been convicted or adjudicated delinquent for sexual assault of another student in the school district must give notice to the school within 72 hours of the conviction or adjudication.

School Responsibilities

If a convicted or adjudicated student has not already been expelled, transferred to another school or an AEDY Transition Program, or if the victim attends the same school, schools must take action to either transfer the student to another school, transfer the student to an AEDY Transition Program, or expel the student. Prior to any transfer or expulsion, the District must provide due process.

In the case of a student with a disability, including a student for whom an evaluation is pending, prior to implementing any disciplinary removal or considering a change of placement for the student, the district will coordinate with the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team and take all steps required to comply with state and federal laws and regulations, and Board policies.

If the sexual assault occurred in a school setting the school principal or administrator will notify the Title IX Coordinator who will determine whether the incident has been addressed in accordance with the School District of Philadelphia's Harassment and Discrimination policy and procedures.

The District will ensure that the convicted or adjudicated student is prohibited from taking part in the following activities at the same time as the victim:

1. Attend the same school.
2. Receive transportation in the same school vehicle.
3. Participate in the same school-sponsored activity.

Return to school

A student who is expelled, transferred or reassigned, may return to the student's originally assigned school only if one (1) of the following circumstances occur:

1. The victim is no longer enrolled in the district.
2. The conviction or adjudication has been reversed and is not pending appeal.

Transfer Students

When the District receives a student who transfers from a public or private school during or after an expulsion period for an act or offense involving a sexual assault conviction or adjudication, the district may assign that student to an alternative assignment or may provide alternative education services.

Prior to admission to the District, a parent/guardian or other person having control or charge of a student is required, upon registration, to provide a sworn statement or affirmation stating whether the student was previously or is presently expelled under the provisions of this section. The registration shall include the name of the school from which the student was expelled with the dates of expulsion and shall be maintained as part of the student's disciplinary record. Any willful false statement made under this subsection shall be subject to 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904 (relating to unsworn falsification to authorities).

Philadelphia Police Department Referrals

Some of the behavior infractions in the code of conduct are also considered crimes according to Pennsylvania state law. **The District has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Philadelphia Police Department (PPD).**

The MOU explicitly states that the following crimes must be reported: *Abductions and Attempts, Assaults, Bomb Scares, Burglary, Drug & Alcohol Offenses, Fire & False Alarms (Arson), Graffiti (if racial or threatening in nature), Child Abuse, Hate Crimes, Morals Offenses (sexual in nature), Property Damage, Robbery, Theft, Trespassing, Weapons Offenses.*

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

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

School Reporting Process

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

Behavior Matrix

#	Behavior Definitions	School Based Interventions	Short-Term Suspension Grades 3-12 1-3 days	Long-Term Suspension Grades 3-12 4-10 days	Disciplinary Hearing Referral Grades 6-12	Expulsion Grades 6-12
1	Profane Language/Gestures and Name Calling. Students who curse or use insulting or sexually explicit language/gestures to put another community member down.	Grades K-12	Level does not apply	Level does not apply	Level does not apply	Level does not apply
2	Disruptive Classroom Behavior. Students who intentionally disrupt the school environment by not following expectations despite non-verbal and verbal redirection. This can include excessive talking that limits others' ability to learn, distracting peers, and not cooperating with teacher/peers in hallway/lunchroom.	Grades K-12	Level does not apply	Level does not apply	Level does not apply	Level does not apply
3	Forgery/Alteration of Grades, Excuse Notes, or School Documents. Students who reproduce the signature of another with the intent to alter official school records such as grades, attendance or reports.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Level does not apply
4	Cheating. Students who submit or intend to submit work that is not their own.	Grades K-12	Level does not apply	Level does not apply	Level does not apply	Level does not apply
5	Unauthorized Entry into School Property. Students who gain entry to a school building at an unauthorized time, including during suspension. This also includes students who allow themselves or other community members into a school building not via the main entrance.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Level does not apply
6	Destruction of Property (Less than \$500). Students who damage or deface school property or the personal property of another school community member.	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Level does not apply	Level does not apply	Level does not apply
7	Destruction of Property (More than \$500). Students who damage or deface school property or the personal property of another school community member.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Level does not apply
8	Theft (Less than \$500) . Students who take school property or the personal property of another school community member.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Level does not apply	Level does not apply	Level does not apply
9	Theft (More than \$500). Students who take school property or the personal property of another school community member.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Level does not apply

#	Behavior Definition	School Based Interventions	Short-Term Suspension Grades 3-12 1-3 days	Long-Term Suspension Grades 3-12 4-10 days	Disciplinary Hearing Referral Grades 6-12	Expulsion Grades 6-12
10	Class Cutting. A student who intentionally does not attend their classes on a consistent basis (weekly, daily), affecting student learning/progress and school climate. This includes hall walking or leaving the building.	Grades K-12	Level does not apply	Level does not apply	Level does not apply	Level does not apply
11	Robbery. Students who take or attempt to take the property of another student or school community member by force, threat of force, or by putting the victim in fear.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Level does not apply
12	Mutual Fight. Students who willingly engage in a one-on-one physical altercation. This is a physical altercation in which none of the participants are identified as victims.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Level does not apply	Level does not apply	Level does not apply
13	Mutual Group Fight. Students who willingly engage in a physical altercation with multiple willing participants. This is a physical altercation in which none of the participants are identified as victims.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Level does not apply
14	Instigation and/or Participation in a Group Assault. Students who instigate or participate in an assault by multiple students on one or more other students. This is a physical confrontation in which participants can clearly be identified as victims and offenders.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Grades 6-12
15	Assault. Students who hit, punch, kick, stab or physically harm a school community member in any way, intentionally and without provocation.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Level does not apply
16	Assault Causing Serious Bodily Injury. Students who intentionally engage in an act that causes bodily injury to another community member. Serious bodily injury causes serious, permanent disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any body part or organ.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Grades 6-12
17	Inappropriate Touch/Exposure. Students who engage in unwanted touching of another school community member either with their own body or with an object or who expose a part of their body to another school community member.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Level does not apply

#	Behavior Definition	School Based Interventions	Short-Term Suspension Grades 3-12 1-3 days	Long-Term Suspension Grades 3-12 4-10 days	Disciplinary Hearing Referral Grades 6-12	Expulsion Grades 6-12
18	Bullying/Cyberbullying. Bullying is repeated intentional conduct (physical, psychological, verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic) that is directed at another student or students. It could happen in or outside of a school setting, is severe, persistent or pervasive, and has one of the following effects: (1) substantially interfere with a student's education, (2) creates a hostile learning environment, or (3) substantially disrupts school operation. Bullying occurs within an interpersonal relationship where there is an imbalance of power (e.g., one person is physically larger, stronger, mentally quicker, or socially more powerful). Cyberbullying occurs through electronic communication devices including but not limited to social networking, e-mail, messaging, texts, tweets, etc.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Grades 6-12
19	Harassment. Students who engage in unwelcome verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct relating to an individual's gender, age, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity expression, national origin, religion, disability, English language proficiency, socioeconomic status and/or political beliefs. The behavior must be considered severe, persistent or pervasive to be considered harassment. The behavior does not have to include intent to harm, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Grades 6-12
20	Hazing. Students who for the purpose of initiating or enhancing a student's membership in a school organization/activity causes or forces that student to violate any criminal law, consume a substance that subjects the student to harm, endure physical, mental or sexual brutality or perform any activity that endangers another.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Level does not apply
21	Sexual Misconduct. Students who engage in a consensual sexual act.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Level does not apply	Level does not apply
22	Threatening Mass Violence. Students who threaten to engage in an act that causes serious physical harm or creates a substantial risk of serious physical harm to a school community.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Grades 6-12

#	Behavior Definition	School Based Interventions	Short-Term Suspension Grades 3-12 1-3 days	Long-Term Suspension Grades 3-12 4-10 days	Disciplinary Hearing Referral Grades 6-12	Expulsion Grades 6-12
23	Threats/Intimidation. Students who threaten to engage in an act that causes harm and introduces fear in another school community member. Threats can be made verbally, in writing, or with gestures.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Grades 6-12
24	Possession and/or Use of Tobacco or Electronic Smoking Devices. Students who use or possess tobacco or any electronic smoking device on school district property or at school sponsored event. This includes but is not limited to products containing tobacco, electronic cigarettes, cigars, vaping, and hookah.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Level does not apply	Level does not apply	Level does not apply
25	Possession and/or Use of Alcohol and/or Drugs. Students who are found to be in possession or who use alcohol/other drugs, which includes drugs in edible/liquid form.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Level does not apply
26	Distribution of Alcohol and/or Drugs. Students who are found to be selling and/or distributing alcohol or drugs, which includes drugs in edible/liquid form.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Grades 6-12
27	Possession of Incendiary Devices and/or Explosives. Students who are found to be in possession of incendiary devices such as matches, lighters, fireworks, firecrackers and/or other explosives.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Level does not apply
28	Use of Incendiary Devices and/or Explosives. Students who use or activate incendiary devices such as matches, lighters, fireworks, firecrackers and/or other explosives. This may include accidental or intentional fire starting.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Grades 6-12
29	Gang Affiliation. Students who engage in dangerous activities on behalf of an identified gang to commit disruptive or illegal acts on school property on behalf of the gang.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Grades 6-12
30	Possession/Use of a Weapon. Students who possess any object, device, or instrument, which, in its inherent and functional purpose is intended to be a weapon. This includes firearms, whether loaded or not, cap guns, pellet guns, BB guns, bombs, knives, box cutters, cutting instruments, nunchaku, taser or mace. <i>This does NOT include toys, such as water or gel blasters, or ordinary objects.</i>	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Grades 6-12

#	Behavior Definition	School Based Interventions	Short-Term Suspension Grades 3-12 1-3 days	Long-Term Suspension Grades 3-12 4-10 days	Disciplinary Hearing Referral Grades 6-12	Expulsion Grades 6-12
31	Reckless Endangerment. Students who take any action that creates a substantial risk such that serious bodily harm could result to any person.	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Level does not apply
32	Inappropriate Use of an Electronic Device. Students who use electronics (cell phones, chrome books etc.) in inappropriate ways including, but not limited to, sexting (sending sexual images/videos), videotaping fights, videotaping someone in a place where they have an expectation of privacy, or posting content that materially impacts the school community. <i>Each school has an electronic device protocol and specific parameters around cell phone use within the school building. All students are expected to follow school-level cell phone protocols.</i>	Grades K-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 3-12	Grades 6-12	Level does not apply

School Based Interventions and Referrals

Please visit the School District of Philadelphia website for more information.

<p>Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Culturally Responsive Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (CR-PBIS) Check-in/Check-out Relationships First (RF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restorative Conversations • Harm & Healing Circles • Circle of Support & Accountability (COSA) <p>De-Escalation Strategies Mediation/Peer Mediation</p>	<p>Behavior Contracting Parent Conference Safety Plan Detention & Reflection Community Service/Projects</p> <p>Referrals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Program (SAP) • Intensive Behavioral Health Services (IBHS) • Intervention Prevention Services (IPS) <p>Crisis Referral (Emergencies)</p>
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The information in this handbook may be updated during the course of the school year

The latest version is available on The School District's website: <https://www.philasd.org/studentrights/> in languages other than English.

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

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

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

School District of Philadelphia Education Center 440 North Broad Street Philadelphia, PA 19130 215-400-4000.

The full Code of Conduct can be accessed online by scanning the QR code below:

