

SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Springfield, New Jersey 07081

POLICY: CONDUCT/DISCIPLINE (INCLUDING HARASSMENT)

The Board believes that an effective instructional program requires an orderly school environment and that the effectiveness of the educational program is, in part, reflected in the behavior of pupils.

The Board of Education expects pupils to conduct themselves in keeping with their level of maturity, with a proper regard for the rights and welfare of other pupils, for school personnel, for the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and for the care of school facilities and equipment.

The Board of Education believes that standards of pupil behavior must be set cooperatively by interaction among the pupils, parents/guardians, staff and community, producing an atmosphere that encourages pupils to grow in self-discipline. Such an atmosphere must include respect for self and others, as well as for district and community property.

The best discipline is self-imposed, and pupils must learn to assume and accept responsibility for their own behavior, and for the consequences of their misbehavior. Staff members who interact with pupils shall use preventive disciplinary action and place emphasis on the pupils' ability to grow in self-discipline.

The Board directs the Chief School Administrator to develop and implement a code of student conduct which establishes standards, policies and procedures for positive student development and student behavioral expectations on school grounds, including on a school bus or at school sponsored functions, and as appropriate, conduct away from school grounds. The Board shall direct development of detailed regulations suited to the age level of the pupils and the physical facilities of the individual schools. Board policy requires each pupil of this district to adhere to the rules and regulations established by the administration and to submit to such disciplinary measures as are appropriately assigned for infraction of those rules. The Chief School Administrator shall provide to pupils and their parents/guardians the rules of this district regarding pupil conduct and the sanctions that may be imposed for breach of those rules. Provisions shall be made for informing parents/guardians whose primary language is other than English.

The Chief School Administrator shall develop regulations that:

- A. Require pupils to conform to reasonable standards of socially acceptable behavior; respect the person, property and rights of others; obey constituted

- authority and respond to those who hold that authority;
- B. Establish the degree of order necessary to the educational program in which pupils are engaged.

The Chief School Administrator shall annually:

- A. Disseminate the code of student conduct to all staff, students and parents;
- B. Report on the implementation of the code of student conduct to the Board of Education at public meeting in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1(a) 5, i-iv.
- C. Report to the New Jersey Department of Education on student conduct, including all student suspension and expulsion and incidences reported under the Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System.

Pupils who display chronic behavioral or academic problems may be referred to the Child Study Team by the Chief School Administrator for possible identification as disruptive or disaffected. Such referrals shall be in strict accordance with the due process regulations prescribed by the administrative code. Pupils so identified shall be provided with appropriate programs and services as prescribed by the Child Study Team.

A pupil whose presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property, or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process, may be suspended or expelled, following due process.

Any pupil who commits an assault (as defined by N.J.S.A. 2C:12-1) upon a Board member, teacher, administrator or other employee of the Board of Education shall be suspended from school immediately according to procedural due process, and suspension or expulsion proceedings shall begin no later than 30 calendar days from the date of the pupil's suspension.

Substance Abuse

In accordance with statute and code, penalties shall be assigned for use, possession and distribution of proscribed substances and drug paraphernalia. The penalties shall be graded according to the severity of the offense. Infractions shall be reported to the local law enforcement agency in accordance with the district's memorandum of agreement. Confidentiality shall be protected in accordance with federal and state law.

Weapons Offenses

Any pupil who is convicted or adjudicated delinquent for possession of a firearm or a crime while armed with a firearm or found knowingly in possession of a firearm on any school property or on a school bus or at a school-sponsored function shall be immediately removed from the school's regular education program for a period of not less than one calendar year. The Chief School Administrator may modify this

suspension on a case-by-case basis. Each pupil so removed shall be placed in an alternative educational program or on home instruction and shall be entitled to a hearing before the board. The hearing shall take place no later than 30 days following the day the pupil is removed from the regular education program and shall be closed to the public.

The principal shall be responsible for the removal of such students and shall immediately report them to the Chief School Administrator. The principal shall also notify the appropriate law enforcement agency of a possible violation of the New Jersey Code of Criminal Justice.

The Chief School Administrator shall determine at the end of the year whether the student is prepared to return to the regular education program, in accordance with procedures established by the Commissioner of Education.

Teaching staff members and other employees of this Board having authority over pupils shall take such lawful means as may be necessary to control the disorderly conduct of pupils in all situations and in all places where such pupils are within the jurisdiction of this board.

Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying

The Board of Education expects pupils to treat each other with civility and respect, and will not tolerate acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying. Like other disruptive or violent behaviors, this conduct interferes with a pupil's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its pupils in a safe environment.

The Board prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying against any pupil.

“Harassment, intimidation or bullying” is defined as any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory handicap, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function or on a school bus and that:

- A. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of harming a pupil or damaging the pupil's property, or placing a pupil in reasonable fear of harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or
- B. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any pupil or group of pupils in such a way as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

“Electronic communication” means a communication that is transmitted by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or

pager, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function or on a school bus.

Any school employee, pupil or volunteer who has witnessed, or has reliable information that a pupil has been subject to harassment, intimidation or bullying, must report the incident to the appropriate school official designated by the administration. The Board shall not tolerate an act of reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying

The Chief School Administrator shall develop appropriate procedures addressing:

- A. A mechanism for reporting acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying, including a means of anonymous reporting;
- B. The prompt investigation of reports of such acts, identifying either the principal or the principal's designee as the person responsible for the investigation;
- C. The range of ways in which a school will respond once an incident of harassment, intimidation or bullying is identified; and
- D. Consequences, discipline and remedial action for a person who commits an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying, who engages in an act of reprisal or retaliation against a person who reports such action, or who falsely accuses another of bullying as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying.

The Chief School Administrator shall take all necessary steps to publicize this policy, and shall inform pupils and staff that harassment, intimidation or bullying is prohibited on school property or any school-sponsored function. This information shall also be incorporated into the student handbook and employee training programs.

Disabled

Classified pupils are subject to the same disciplinary procedures as nondisabled pupils and may be disciplined in accordance with their IEP. However, before disciplining a classified pupil, it must be determined that:

- A. The pupil's behavior is not primarily caused by his/her educational disability;
- B. The program that is being provided meets the pupil's needs.

Staff shall comply with state and federal law and the regulations of the New Jersey administrative code in dealing with discipline and/or suspension of all pupils with disabilities.

Implementation

The Chief School Administrator shall ensure that the rules for this policy are applied consistently and uniformly, and that all disciplinary sanctions are carried out with

necessary due process.

The Board shall review all related policies on a regular basis.

Legal references:

N.J.S.A. 2C:12-1 Definition of assault
N.J.S.A. 2C:33-19 Paging devices, possession by students
N.J.S.A. 2C:39-5 Unlawful possession of weapons
N.J.S.A. 18A:6-1 Corporal punishment of pupils
N.J.S.A. 18A:11-1 General mandatory powers and duties
N.J.S.A. 18A:25-2 Authority over pupils
N.J.S.A. 18A:36-1 Newly enrolled students; records and identification
N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1 et seq. Discipline of Pupils
N.J.S.A. 18A:40A-1 et seq. Substance Abuse
N.J.S.A. 18A:54-20 Powers of board (county vocational schools)
N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.8 Discipline/suspension/expulsions
N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1.1 et seq. Programs to Support Student Development
N.J.A.C. 6A:32-12.1 Reporting requirements
N.J.A.C. 6A:32-12.2 School-level planning

P.L. 2007, c.129, amends N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15 and includes electronic communication in the definition of public school “harassment, intimidation or bullying”

20 U.S.C.A. 1415(k) Individual with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997

Bethel School District No. 403, v. Fraser, 478 U.S. 675 (1986)

Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier 484 U.S. 260 (1988)

Honig v. Doe, 484 U.S. 305 (1988)

See also Commissioners’ Decisions indexed under “Pupils – Punishment of” in Index to N.J. School Law Decisions

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. 107-110, 20 U.S.C.A. 6301 et seq.

L.W. v. Toms River Regional Schools Board of Education, N.J., No. A-111-05 (Feb. 22, 2007), 2007 N.J. LEXIS 184. The New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that a school district may be held liable under the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 to -49, when students harass another student because of his perceived sexual orientation. A district school will be liable for such harassment if it knew or should have known of the harassment but failed to take reasonable remedial actions. The matter was remanded to the Director of the Division of Civil Rights.

A Uniform State Memorandum of Agreement Between Education and Law
Enforcement Officials (1999 Revisions)

Cross References:

1220 Ad hoc advisory committees
1410 Local units
3517 Security
3541.33 Transportation safety
4131 Staff development; inservice education/visitation conferences
4148 Employee protection
4231 Staff development; inservice education/visitation conferences
4248 Employee protection
5000 Concepts and roles in pupil personnel
5010 Personal goals and objectives for pupils
5020 Role of parents/guardians
5113 Absences and excuses
5114 Suspension and expulsion
5124 Reporting to parents/guardians
5127 Commencement activities
5131.5 Vandalism/violence
5131.6 Drugs, alcohol, tobacco (substance abuse)
5131.7 Weapons and dangerous instruments
5132 Dress and grooming
5145 Rights
5145.2 Freedom of speech/expression
5145.4 Equal educational opportunity
5145.6 Pupil grievance procedure
5145.11 Questioning and apprehension
5145.12 Search and seizure
6145 Extracurricular activities
6164.4 Child study team
6171.4 Special education
6172 Alternative educational programs

Approved: June 30, 1997

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