



# **CODE OF CONDUCT (2021) PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY**



**PUBLICATION, DISSEMINATION AND REVIEW**

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## **DISSEMINATION OF ROCHESTER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT'S CODE OF CONDUCT PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY**

The Board will work to ensure that the community is aware of the District's Code of Conduct by:

1. Mailing this Plain Language Summary to all parents of District students before the beginning of the school year and making the Summary available later upon request.
2. Providing copies of the Summary to all students at a general assembly held at the beginning of each school year.
3. Providing all current teachers and other staff members with a copy of the Summary and a copy of any amendments to the Code as soon as practicable after adoption.
4. Posting the Code of Conduct and Plain Language Summary on the School District website.

### **INTRO:**

The Rochester City School District (the "District") and its Board of Education (the "Board") are committed to providing a safe school environment where all students may receive a high-quality education. As such, school discipline policies are aimed at creating a positive school climate, supporting social and emotional development of students and teaching non-violence and respect for all members of the school community.

Accordingly, the District has developed, and its Board of Education adopted a Revised Code of Conduct on June 24, 2021, as Policy 1400, which governs the conduct of students, all school personnel, parents, and other visitors when on school property, while traveling in vehicles funded by the District, or while attending school functions. The following is a Plain Language Summary of the Rochester City School District's Code of Conduct. It does not replace the complete Code of Conduct. The full text of the Code of Conduct may be found on the District webpage, at Central Office and is available at all school sites.

### **FAMILIES AS PARTNERS**

Students, parents and school personnel all have a role in making schools safe and must cooperate with one another to achieve this goal. Routine outreach to parents can include, but is not limited to, a phone call and/or a written communication. As role models,

parents and school staff should exhibit the behaviors that they would like to see student emulate.

## **DEVELOPMENTAL SUPPORTS FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL, COMMUNITY MEMBERS, PARENTS AND STUDENTS**

A transformed, intentional school climate and culture must emphasize support for all members of the school community to maintain its vitality. Specifically, school leadership and personnel who hold positions throughout the building must be supported with a variety of resources and approaches that enable them to learn and to foster the changes and growth needed. In addition, students, families, and community members need these supports as well.

### **SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY**

In all school communities, accountability must be equitably shared and reciprocal, rather than hierarchical. All community members should hold themselves, and each other, accountable both to their community and to their shared vision for their community. Members are encouraged to reflect frequently on how their behaviors either support the shared values of the community or fail to do so, and to consider behaviors that would be more supportive of the community's values.

## **RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS**

The District commits to creating learning communities in which all members are understood to be growing, caring, respectful people. To that end, all members should have the right to expect:

1. An environment that deeply supports teaching and learning.
2. Fair and respectful treatment throughout the community, with full opportunity to be heard.
3. Non-discrimination and equal treatment with respect to all school activities.
4. Open and transparent communication and explanation of school procedures, rules, and policies.
5. Commitment throughout the school to policies aimed at growth as a learning community and at growth of each individual member of the community.

## STUDENT'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The District is committed to upholding students' rights in accordance with the following. Students are also expected to fulfill their responsibilities to fully participate in their education as outlined below.

RIGHTS	RESPONSIBILITIES
To attend school in the District in which one's legal parent or legal guardian resides and receive a free and appropriate public education from age 5 to 21, as provided by law.	To attend school daily, regularly and on time, perform assignments, strive to do the highest quality work possible, be prepared to learn, and be granted the opportunity to receive a good education.
To expect that school will be a safe, orderly and purposeful place for all students to gain an education and to be treated fairly.	To be aware of all rules and expectations regulating students' behavior and conduct themselves in accordance with these guidelines.
To access school policies, regulations and rules and have them explained by school staff, when necessary.	
To be respected as an individual and treated courteously, fairly and respectfully by other students and school staff.	To respect everyone in the school community and to treat others courteously, fairly and respectfully.
To express one's opinion verbally or in writing.	To express opinions and ideas in a respectful manner so as not to offend, slander, or restrict the rights and privileges of others.
To dress in such a way as to express one's identity and personality.	To dress appropriately in accordance with the dress code.
To be afforded equal and appropriate educational opportunities, including access to extracurricular and afterschool programs.	To be aware of available educational programs in order to use and develop one's capabilities to their maximum.
To take part in all school activities on an equal basis regardless of race, color, creed, weight/appearance, religion, religious practices, creed, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, national origin, ethnic group, ancestry, citizenship status, political affiliation, age, marital status, predisposing genetic characteristics, or disability.	To work to the best of one's ability in all academic and extracurricular activities, as well as being fair and supportive of others.
To have access to relevant and objective information concerning drug and alcohol abuse, as well as access to individuals or agencies capable of providing direct assistance to students with serious personal problems.	To be aware of information and services and to seek assistance in dealing with personal problems, when appropriate.
To be protected from intimidation, harassment, or discrimination based on actual or perceived race, color, creed, weight/appearance, religion, religious practices, creed, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, national origin, ethnic group, ancestry, citizenship status, political affiliation, age, marital status, predisposing genetic characteristics, or disability by employees or students on school property or at a school-sponsored event, function or activity.	To respect one another and treat others fairly in accordance with the District Code of Conduct and the provisions of the Dignity Act. To conduct oneself in a manner that fosters an environment that is free from intimidation, harassment or discrimination. To report and encourage others to report any incidents of intimidation, harassment or discrimination.



To freedom of speech and of the press and the right to petition and peacefully organize with other students with the purpose of improving the school, classroom, and/or learning environment.	To work together with classmates and school staff to maintain a positive school climate.
To due process, to be considered innocent until proven guilty, and to a fair and impartial grievance process to resolve student concerns. To present one's version of events for schools staff to take into account in situations in which disciplinary action is being considered.	To complete schoolwork, abiding by school rules regarding academic history.
To organize with other students and self-represent in important school decision-making processes.	

## PREVENTION, INTERVENTION & PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

### *Universal Prevention*

A district-wide, whole school approach to promoting positive behavior is the foundation to building and maintaining a positive culture within each school.

### *Guidance Interventions Contrasted with Disciplinary Responses*

Responding to problem behaviors through early, systematic interventions when problems are first identified can prevent escalation and repeat occurrence of problem behaviors.

### *Progressive Discipline*

Understanding discipline as a “teachable moment” is fundamental to RCSD’s approach to discipline. Progressive discipline uses incremental interventions to address inappropriate behavior with the ultimate goal of teaching pro-social behavior.

### *Restorative Approaches*

Restorative practices foster healthy relationships within the school community and promote positive discipline in schools by resolving conflicts, holding individuals and groups accountable, repairing harm, reducing and preventing student misbehavior, and addressing the needs of all parties involved.

## LEVELS OF INTERVENTION AND DISCIPLINARY RESPONSES

### *Factors to Consider in Determining Disciplinary Responses*

School staff must consider what factors contributed to the problem behavior and whether such behavior could be alleviated by helping the student understand

and deal with the factors causing the behavior.

1. Age, health, and disability or special education status of the student.
2. Appropriateness of student’s academic placement.
3. Student’s prior conduct and record of behavior.
4. Student’s understanding of the impact of their behavior.
5. Student’s willingness to repair the harm caused by their behavior.
6. Seriousness of the behavioral offense and the degree of harm caused.
7. Whether the behavior constitutes a DASA violation, and if so, what response is required to satisfy the District’s obligation under DASA.
8. The circumstances/context in which the conduct occurred.
9. Whether the student was acting in self-defense.
10. Whether the student’s offense threatened the safety of any student or staff member.
11. Impact of the incident on overall school community.
12. The likelihood that a lesser intervention would adequately address the violation.
13. Whether the school made any effort to address the student’s behavior using positive, preventive methods prior to the incident at issue.
14. Any other mitigating or aggravating circumstances that may be relevant.
15. In the event that a court issues an order of protection for the benefit of a District student or employee, the student against whom the order is issued may be transferred to another school if necessary to comply with the order.

### *Matrix for Guidance Interventions and Disciplinary Responses*

The Code of Conduct holds students accountable for their behavior. Misbehavior is grouped into four levels based on the seriousness of the behavior. Each level contains a variety of interventions and consequences for school staff to use in response to the student behavior. The Code of Conduct provides graduated accountability measures for students who engage in repeated behaviors despite prior interventions or consequences. (See pages 28 - 41 of the Code of Conduct for the full matrix)

Under this Matrix, school staff response to student behaviors with guidance interventions and, depending on the circumstances, disciplinary responses. School staff can choose one of many guidance interventions to help students improve their behavior. At all levels, students may receive a non-disciplinary referral to support staff in the school building.

The Matrix intentionally limits the behaviors for which a student can receive a disciplinary exclusion, such as classroom removal, short- or long-term suspension, or expulsion. Except for prolonged or repeated behaviors, students are not suspended for Level 1 or 2 behaviors or removed from a classroom for Level 1 behaviors. Students may be given a classroom removal for Level 2, 3 or 4 behaviors. Students may be given suspension for Level 3 or 4 behaviors. Students who engage in misconduct that is not included in the Matrix are subject to appropriate disciplinary measures as determined by school administration, consistent with the disciplinary levels for similar behaviors set forth in the matrix.

<b>Level 1</b>	Uncooperative/ Noncompliant behavior	Classroom Interventions; Student Support Team Interventions
<b>Level 2</b>	Disorderly/ Disruptive Behavior	Intensive Support Staff; Administrator Interventions and Responses
<b>Level 3</b>	Aggressive or Injurious/ Harmful Behavior	Referral Interventions; Suspension Responses
<b>Level 4</b>	Seriously Dangerous or Violent Behavior	Referral Interventions; Extended Suspension Responses

### **DATA COLLECTION**

#### *Annual Data Collection & Review*

Schools will biannually review their discipline data and submit a written report to the District and the Board of Education. Schools and the District will make the following data and reports publicly available. Based on the review, schools will make changes to their implementation of the Code of Conduct consistent with the intent of this and other policies.

### **ANNUAL REVIEW, DISSEMINATION & REGULATION**

Through its Policy Development and Review Committee ("Policy Committee"), the Board of Education will review the Code of Conduct annually at or following the close of each academic year.

### **DRESS CODE**

#### *Standards*

All persons are expected to give proper attention to personal hygiene and to dress appropriately for school and school functions. When on school property or at a school function, a person's dress, grooming and appearance, including jewelry, make-up and nails, must:

- Cover buttocks, stomach/midriff and chest.
- Not include clothing, headgear or jewelry that is associated with or identifiable as a symbol of gang





membership.

- Be void of abusive, suggestive or profane language; symbols of illegal substances; or any other words, symbols or slogans that disrupt the learning environment or deny dignity or respect to others.
- Include shoes, which are to be worn at all times for health and safety reasons.

## **DUE PROCESS**

Before being suspended, students are entitled to due process, which means an incident is investigated first, students have a chance to tell their side of the story and both student and parents are notified. See Appendix C on pages 64 – 76 of the full Code.

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The Board of Education is committed to a policy of inclusion of students with disabilities within the full range of programs offered to students of the District generally, to the fullest extent consistent with the specific needs of individuals. Consistent with the principle of inclusion, to the fullest extent provided by federal or state law, the policy of the District regarding student discipline for students shall be uniform for all students, both with reference to disciplinary proceedings and reporting crimes to appropriate authorities.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

### *Roles of Law Enforcement and Criminal Investigations*

The Board of Education acknowledges the role of law enforcement in contributing to safe and secure schools. Police presence for arrest or detention of a student is subject to Board Policy 5600 and Regulation 5600-R and is to be used only as a last resort when there is a serious, actual threat to safety.

