

CODE OF CONDUCT

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5300.01 INTRODUCTION

The Board of Education is committed to providing a safe and orderly school environment where students may receive and district personnel may deliver quality educational services without disruption or interference. Responsible behavior by students, teachers, other district personnel, parents and other visitors is essential to achieving this goal.

The district has a long-standing set of expectations for conduct on school property and at school functions. These expectations are based on the principles of civility, mutual respect, citizenship, character, tolerance, honesty and integrity.

No student shall be subjected to harassment and/or bullying by District staff or students on school property or at school functions. Nor shall any student be subjected to discrimination by District staff or students on school property or at school functions based upon his/her actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.

The Board recognizes the need to clearly define these expectations for acceptable conduct on school property, identify the possible consequences of unacceptable conduct, and to ensure that discipline, when necessary, is administered promptly and fairly. To this end, the Board adopts this code of conduct ("code").

Unless otherwise indicated, this code applies to all students, school personnel, parents and other visitors when on school property or attending a school function.

5300.05 DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this code, the following definitions apply:

- A. **"Disruptive student"** means an elementary or secondary student under the age of 21 who is substantially disruptive of the educational process or who substantially interferes with the teacher's authority over the classroom.
- B. **"Parent"** means parent, guardian or person in parental relation to a student.
- C. **"School property"** means in/on or within any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, parking lot or land contained within the real property boundary line of a public elementary or secondary school, or in or on a school bus.
- D. **"School function"** means any school-sponsored extra-curricular event or activity.
- E. **"Violent student"** means a student under the age of 21 who:
 - 1. Commits an act of violence upon a school employee, or attempts to do so.
 - 2. Commits, while on school property or at a school function, an act of violence upon another student or any other person lawfully on school property or at the school function, or attempts to do so.
 - 3. Possesses, while on school property or at a school function, a weapon.
 - 4. Displays, while on school property or at a school function, what appears to be a weapon.
 - 5. Threatens, while on school property or at a school function, to use a weapon.
 - 6. Knowingly and intentionally damages or destroys the personal property of any school employee or any person lawfully on school property or at a school function.
 - 7. Knowingly and intentionally damages or destroys school district property.
- F. **"Weapon"** means a firearm as defined in 18 USC §921 for purposes of the Gun-Free Schools Act. It also means any other gun, BB gun, pistol, revolver, shotgun, rifle, machine gun, disguised gun, dagger, dirk,

razor, stiletto, switchblade knife, gravity knife, brass knuckles, sling shot, metal knuckle knife, box cutters, cane sword, electronic dart gun, Kung Fu star, electronic stun gun, pepper spray or other noxious spray or canister, explosive or incendiary bomb.

- G. **“School bus”** means every motor vehicle owned and operated by the Mahopac Central School District for the transportation of students, children of students, teachers and other persons acting in a supervisory capacity and a motor vehicle privately owned and operated for compensation for the transportation of students, children of students, teachers and other persons acting in a supervisory capacity to or from school or school functions.
- H. **“Disability”** means (a) a physical, mental or medical impairment resulting from anatomical, physiological, genetic or neurological conditions which prevents the exercise of a normal bodily function or is demonstrable by medically accepted clinical or laboratory diagnostic techniques or (b) a record of such an impairment or (c) a condition regarded by others as such an impairment, provided, however, that in the context of employment, the term is limited to disabilities which, upon the provision of reasonable accommodations, do not prevent the individual from performing in a reasonable manner the activities involved in the job or occupation sought or held.
- I. **“Student with a disability”** means a student who, because of mental, physical or emotional reasons can only receive appropriate educational opportunities from a program of special education. This phrase does not include a student whose educational needs are due primarily to unfamiliarity with the English language, environmental, cultural or economic factors.
- J. **“Employee and/or School personnel and/or District staff”** means any person receiving compensation from the Mahopac Central School District, or employee of a contracted service provider, or worker placed within the school under a public assistance employment program, for the provision of educational or related services to Mahopac Central School District, its students or staff.
- K. **“Sexual orientation”** means actual or perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality, or bisexuality.
- L. **“Gender”** means actual or perceived sex and includes a person’s gender identity or expression.
- M. **“Harassment and/or bullying”** means the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation or abuse, including cyberbullying as defined in Education Law §11(8), that
 - (a) has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student’s educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional or physical well-being; or
 - (b) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety; or
 - (c) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to a student.

Such definition includes acts of harassment, including bullying, that occur: (i) on school property; and/or (ii) at a school function; and/or (iii) off school property and creates or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property.

For purposes of this definition, the term “threats, intimidation or abuse” shall include verbal and non-verbal actions.

Acts of harassment and bullying that are prohibited include those acts based on a person's actual or perceived membership in the following groups including, but not limited to: race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender (which includes a person's actual or perceived sex, as well as gender identity and expression).

- N. ***“Cyber-bullying”*** means harassment or bullying, as defined in Section “M”, where such harassment or bullying occurs through any form of electronic communication.
- O. ***“Emotional Harm”*** that takes place in the context of “harassment or bullying” means harm to a student’s emotional well-being through creation of a hostile school environment that is so severe or pervasive as to unreasonably and substantially interfere with a student’s education.
- P. ***“Discrimination”*** means discrimination against any student by a student or students and/or employee or employees on school property or at a school function including, but not limited to, discrimination based on a person’s actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.

5300.10 STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Student Rights

The district is committed to safeguarding the rights given to all students under state and federal law. In addition, to promote a safe, healthy, orderly and civil school environment, all district students have the right to:

1. Receive a free, appropriate education promoting personal and academic growth and active citizenship.
2. Take part in all district activities on an equal basis regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, creed, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, gender (identity or expression), sex, sexual orientation or disability.
3. Present their version of the relevant events to school personnel authorized to impose a disciplinary penalty in connection with the imposition of the penalty.
4. Access school rules and, when necessary, receive an explanation of those rules from school personnel.
5. All students have the right to be free from harassment and/or bullying by District staff or students on school property or at school functions.
6. All students have the right to be free from discrimination by District staff or students on school property or at school functions based upon his/her actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.

B. Student Responsibilities

The district supports the view that a school exists primarily to educate students. A calm, orderly atmosphere must exist if learning and academic excellence is to be successfully achieved. Students must develop both academically-and socially-responsible behaviors if the school is going to positively and productively realize its mission. All district students have the responsibility to:

1. Contribute to maintaining a safe and orderly school environment that is conducive to learning.
2. Show respect and tolerance in dealing with others and their property at all times.
3. Be familiar with and abide by all district policies, rules and regulations dealing with student conduct.
4. Be regular and punctual in attendance to class, meetings and activities.
5. Work to the best of their ability in all academic and extracurricular pursuits and strive toward their highest level of achievement possible.
6. React to and interact with teachers, administrators and other school personnel in a respectful, positive manner.
7. Work to develop mechanisms to control their anger.
8. Ask questions when they do not understand and be honest in all circumstances.
9. Seek help in solving problems that might lead to discipline.
10. Dress appropriately for school and school functions.
11. Accept responsibility and consequences for their actions in a mature fashion.
12. Conduct themselves as representatives of the district when participating in or attending school-sponsored extracurricular events and to hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct, demeanor, and sportsmanship.
13. Report incidents of violence or potential incidents to appropriate adults.
14. All students have the responsibility not to engage in harassment and/or bullying on school property or at school functions.
15. All students have the responsibility to not engage in discrimination based upon another student's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.

5300.15 ESSENTIAL PARTNERS

A. Parents

Research indicates that significant parental involvement in the education of children leads to higher academic achievement, increased self-esteem, and fewer behavior problems. Consequently, all parents are expected to:

1. Recognize that the education of their child(ren) is a joint responsibility of the parents and the school community.
2. Send their children to school ready to participate and learn.
3. Ensure their children attend school regularly and on time.
4. Ensure absences are excused.
5. Insist their children be dressed and groomed in a manner consistent with the student dress code.
6. Help their children understand that in a democratic society appropriate rules are required to maintain a safe, orderly environment.
7. Know school rules and help their children understand them.
8. Convey and demonstrate to their children a supportive attitude toward education and the district.
9. Build good relationships with teachers, other parents and their children's friends.
10. Help their children deal effectively with peer pressure.
11. Inform school officials of changes in the home situation that may affect student conduct or performance.
12. Provide a place for study and ensure homework assignments are completed.
13. Discuss with their child(ren) the importance of mutual respect and dignity for their peers regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.

B. Teachers

Teacher skill and preparation, combined with higher expectations for student achievement and effective communication with the home, are known to contribute to student success. It is for these reasons that all district teachers are expected to:

1. Maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex, which will strengthen students' self-concept and promote confidence to learn.
2. Be prepared to teach.
3. Demonstrate interest in teaching and concern for student achievement.
4. Know school policies and rules, and enforce them in a fair and consistent manner.
5. Communicate to students and parents:
 - a. Course objectives and requirements
 - b. Marking/grading procedures
 - c. Assignment deadlines
 - d. Expectations for students
 - e. Classroom discipline plan
6. Communicate regularly with students, parents and other teachers concerning growth and achievement.
7. Maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.
8. Confront issues of discrimination, harassment and/or bullying or any situation that threatens the emotional or physical health or safety of any student, District staff or any person who is lawfully on school property or at a school function.
9. Address personal biases that may prevent equal treatment of all students in the school or classroom setting.

10. Report incidents of discrimination, harassment and/or bullying that are witnessed by a teacher, or otherwise brought to a teacher's attention, by orally notifying the principal, superintendent, or their designee not later than one (1) school day after the teacher/teaching assistant witnesses or receives a report of such acts, and by filing a written report with the principal, superintendent, or their designee no later than two (2) school days after making an oral report..

C. Counselors

1. Encourage students to strive for academic excellence by enrolling in the most appropriate and challenging courses.
2. Encourage students to benefit from the extracurricular programs offered by the school.
3. Regularly review with students their educational progress and career plans.
4. Provide information to assist students with post-secondary education preparation and career planning.
5. Initiate teacher/student/counselor conferences and parent/teacher/student/counselor conferences, as necessary, as a way to resolve problems.
6. Assist students in coping with peer pressure and emerging personal, social, and emotional problems.
7. Maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.
8. Confront issues of discrimination, harassment and/or bullying or any situation that threatens the emotional or physical health or safety of any student, District staff or any person who is lawfully on school property or at a school function.
9. Address personal biases that may prevent equal treatment of all students in the school or classroom setting.
10. Report incidents of discrimination, harassment and/or bullying that are witnessed by the counselor, or otherwise brought to the counselor's attention, by orally notifying the principal, superintendent, or their designee not later than one (1) school day after the teacher/teaching assistant witnesses or receives a report of such acts, and by filing a written report with the principal, superintendent, or their designee no later than two (2) school days after making an oral report..

D. Principals

1. Promote a safe, orderly and stimulating school environment, supporting active teaching and learning.
2. Ensure that students and staff have the opportunity to communicate regularly with the Principal and approach the Principal for redress of grievances.
3. Evaluate on a regular basis all instructional programs.
4. Support the development of and student participation in appropriate extracurricular activities.
5. Be responsible for enforcing the code of conduct and ensuring that all cases are resolved promptly and fairly.
6. Support, strengthen and promote a spirit of shared responsibility in establishing a positive school climate.
7. Maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.
8. Confront issues of discrimination, harassment and/or bullying or any situation that threatens the emotional or physical health or safety of any student, District staff or any person who is lawfully on school property or at a school function.
9. Address personal biases that may prevent equal treatment of all students in the school or classroom setting.
10. Report incidents of discrimination, harassment and/or bullying that are witnessed by the Principal, or otherwise brought to the Principal's attention, by orally notifying the principal, superintendent, or their designee not later than one (1) school day after the Building

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Administrator witnesses or receives a report of such acts, and by filing a written report with the principal, superintendent, or their designee no later than two (2) school days after making an oral report..

11. Along with the Dignity Act Coordinator, investigate incidents of discrimination, harassment and/or bullying that are witnessed by the principal, or otherwise brought to the principal's attention, in a timely manner.

E. Superintendent

1. Promote a safe, orderly and stimulating school environment, supporting active teaching and learning.
2. Review with district administrators the policies of the Board of education and state and federal laws relating to school operations and management.
3. Inform the Board about educational trends relating to student discipline.
4. Work to create instructional programs that minimize problems of misconduct and are sensitive to student and teacher needs.
5. Work with district administrators in enforcing the code of conduct and ensuring that all cases are resolved promptly and fairly.
6. Maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.
7. Confront issues of discrimination, harassment and/or bullying or any situation that threatens the emotional or physical health or safety of any student, District staff or any person who is lawfully on school property or at a school function.
8. Address personal biases that may prevent equal treatment of all students in the school or classroom setting.
9. Report incidents of discrimination, harassment and/or bullying that are witnessed by the Superintendent, or otherwise brought to the Superintendent's attention, by orally notifying the principal, or the principal's or superintendent's designee not later than one (1) school day after the Superintendent witnesses or receives a report of such acts, and by filing a written report with the principal, or the principal's or superintendent's designee no later than two (2) school days after making an oral report.

F. Board of Education

1. Collaborate with student, teacher, administrator, and parent organizations, school safety personnel and other school personnel to develop a code of conduct that clearly defines expectations for the conduct of students, district personnel and visitors on school property and at school functions.
2. Adopt and review at least annually the district's code of conduct to evaluate the code's effectiveness and the fairness and consistency of its implementation.
3. Lead by example by conducting Board meetings in a professional, respectful, courteous manner.
4. Maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.
5. Address personal biases that may prevent equal treatment of all students in the school or classroom setting.
6. Confront issues of discrimination, harassment and/or bullying or any situation that threatens the emotional or physical health or safety of any student, District staff or any person who is lawfully on school property or at a school function.

5300.20 STUDENT DRESS CODE

All students are expected to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to dress appropriately. An individual's appearance does have a bearing on how he/she behaves and how others react to him/her. Students and their parents have the primary responsibility for acceptable student dress and appearance. Teachers and all other district personnel should exemplify and reinforce acceptable student dress and help students develop an understanding of appropriate appearance in the school setting. A student's dress, grooming and appearance shall:

1. Be safe, appropriate and not disrupt or interfere with the educational process.
2. Recognize that extremely brief garments such as tube tops, net tops, halter tops, spaghetti straps, plunging necklines (front and/or back) and see-through garments are not appropriate. Shorts, skirts, dresses should be of appropriate style and length.
3. Ensure that underwear is completely covered with outer clothing.
4. Include footwear at all times. Footwear that is a safety hazard will not be allowed.
5. Not include items that are vulgar, obscene, libelous, or denigrate others, including, but limited to items that are vulgar, obscene, libelous, or denigrate others on account of actual or perceived race, color, weight, religion, creed, national origin, ethnic group, religious practice, gender (identity or expression), sex, sexual orientation or disability.
6. Hats, caps, bandanas or other headgear are strongly discouraged. Individual classroom teachers (and administrators) reserve the right to ban head gear in the classroom (or school) during instructional time.
7. Not promote and/or endorse the use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs and/or encourage other illegal or violent activities.
8. Not include sunglasses unless medically warranted and deemed so by a physician.
9. Not include chains, spikes, and other potentially dangerous ornaments.
10. Not include clothing that advocates gang identity.
11. Not include the possession of personal communication devices, including, but not limited to, beepers, cellular telephones, and walkie-talkies. Additionally, not include the possession of personal stereo equipment, headphones, or personal television units. However, students are allowed to be in possession of the aforementioned personal devices when allowed by a principal and/or teacher for a specific educational purpose.

Each Building Principal or his/her designee shall be responsible for informing all students and their parents of the student dress code at the beginning of the school year and any revisions to the dress code made during the school year.

Students who violate the student dress code shall be required to modify their appearance by covering or removing the offending item, and if necessary or practical, replacing it with an acceptable item. Any student who refuses to do so shall be subject to discipline, up to and including in-school suspension for the day. Any student who repeatedly fails to comply with the dress code shall be subject to further discipline, up to and including out of school suspension.

5300.25 PROHIBITED STUDENT CONDUCT

The Board of Education expects all students to conduct themselves in an appropriate and civil manner, with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students, district personnel and other members of the school community, and for the care of school facilities and equipment.

The best discipline is self-imposed, and students must learn to assume and accept responsibility for their own behavior, as well as for the consequences of their misbehavior. District personnel who interact with students are expected to use disciplinary action only when necessary and to place emphasis on the students' ability to grow in self-discipline.

The Board recognizes the need to make its expectations for student conduct while on school property or engaged in a school function specific and clear. The rules of conduct listed below are intended to do that and focus on safety and respect for the rights and property of others. Students who will not accept responsibility for their own behavior and who violate these school rules will be required to accept the penalties for their conduct.

Students may be subject to a range of disciplinary action, up to and including suspension from school, when they:

- A. Engage in conduct that is disorderly. Examples of disorderly conduct include:
 - 1. Running in hallways.
 - 2. Making unreasonable noise.
 - 3. Using language or gestures that are profane, lewd, vulgar or abusive.
 - 4. Obstructing vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
 - 5. Engaging in any willful act which disrupts the normal operation of the school community.
 - 6. Trespassing. Students are not permitted in any school building, other than the one they regularly attend, without permission from the administrator in charge of the building.
 - 7. Computer/electronic communications misuse, including any unauthorized use of computers, software, or internet/intranet account; accessing inappropriate websites; or any other violation of the district's acceptable use policy.

- B. Engage in conduct that is insubordinate. Examples of insubordinate conduct include:
 - 1. Failing to comply with the reasonable directions of teachers, school administrators or other school employees in charge of students or otherwise demonstrating disrespect.
 - 2. Lateness for, missing or leaving school without permission.
 - 3. Skipping detention.

- C. Engage in conduct that is disruptive. Examples of disruptive conduct include:
 - 1. Failing to comply with the reasonable directions of teachers, school administrators or other school personnel in charge of students.

- D. Engage in conduct that is violent. Examples of violent conduct include:
 - 1. Committing an act of violence (such as hitting, kicking, punching, and scratching) upon a teacher, administrator or other school employee or attempting to do so.
 - 2. Committing an act of violence (such as hitting, kicking, punching, and scratching) upon another student or any other person lawfully on school property or attempting to do so.
 - 3. Possessing a weapon. Authorized law enforcement officials are the only persons permitted to have a weapon in their possession while on school property or at a school function.
 - 4. Displaying what appears to be a weapon on school property.
 - 5. Threatening to use any weapon on school property.
 - 6. Intentionally damaging or destroying the personal property of a student, teacher, administrator, other district employee or any person lawfully on school property, including graffiti or arson.
 - 7. Intentionally vandalizing, damaging or destroying school district property.

- E. Engage in any conduct that endangers the safety, morals, health or welfare of others. Examples of such conduct include:
1. Lying to school personnel.
 2. Stealing the property of other students, school personnel or any other person lawfully on school property or attending a school function.
 3. Defamation, which includes making false or unprivileged statements or representations about an individual or identifiable group of individuals that harm the reputation of the person or the identifiable group by demeaning them
 4. Discrimination, as defined in 5300.05, Section P.
 5. Bullying, as defined in 5300.05, Section M.
 6. Harassment, as defined in 5300.05 Section M.
 7. Intimidation, which includes engaging in actions or statements that put an individual in fear of bodily harm.
 8. Hazing, which includes any intentional or reckless act directed against another for the purpose of initiation into, affiliating with or maintaining membership in any school sponsored activity, organization, club or team.
 9. Selling, using, possessing or creating obscene material.
 10. Using vulgar or abusive language, cursing or swearing.
 11. Smoking a cigarette, cigar, pipe or using chewing or smokeless tobacco. For middle school students, this includes the possession, sale for distribution of these products, lighter or matches.
 12. Possessing, consuming, selling, distributing, exchanging, or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages, synthetic cannabinoids or illegal substances.
 13. "Illegal substances" include, but are not limited to, inhalants, marijuana, cocaine, LSD, PCP, amphetamines, heroin, steroids, look-alike drugs, and any substances commonly referred to as "designer drugs."
 14. Inappropriately possessing, using or sharing prescription and over-the-counter drugs.
 15. Gambling.
 16. Indecent exposure, that is, exposure to sight of the private parts of the body in a lewd or indecent manner.
 17. Initiating a report warning of fire or other catastrophe without valid cause, misuse of 911, or discharging a fire extinguisher.
- F. Engage in misconduct while on a school bus. It is crucial for students to behave appropriately while riding on district buses, to ensure their safety and that of other passengers and to avoid distracting the bus driver. Students are required to conduct themselves on the bus in a manner consistent with established standards for classroom behavior. Excessive noise, pushing, shoving and fighting will not be tolerated. Students are expected to be seated while the bus is in motion.
- G. Engage in any form of academic misconduct. Examples of academic misconduct include:
1. Plagiarizing.
 2. Cheating.
 3. Copying.
 4. Altering records.
 5. Assisting another student in any of the above actions.
 6. Forging the names of parents, teachers or other students.

5300.26 ANTI-HARASSMENT, ANTI-BULLYING AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION IN THE MAHOPAC CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Board of Education affirms its commitment to nondiscrimination and recognizes its responsibility to provide an environment that is free of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination. Harassment and bullying are violations of law and stands in direct opposition to District policy.

Therefore, the Board prohibits and condemns:

- all forms of harassment and/or bullying;
- all forms of discrimination against employees on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, political affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, military status, veteran status, disability, use of a recognized guide dog, hearing dog or service dog, or domestic violence victim status; and
- all forms of discrimination against students on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, weight, creed, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, gender (identity or expression), sexual orientation, sex, by employees, school volunteers, students, and non-employees, such as contractors and vendors as well as any third parties who are participating in, observing, or otherwise engaging in activities subject to the supervision and control of the District.

Sexual orientation is defined as heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, or asexuality, whether actual or perceived.

The Board also prohibits harassment, bullying and/or discrimination based on an individual's opposition to harassment, bullying and/or discrimination or participation in a related investigation or complaint proceeding under the anti-discrimination statutes. This policy of nondiscrimination, anti-bullying and anti-harassment will be enforced on School District premises and in school buildings; and at all school-sponsored events, programs and activities, including those that take place at locations off school premises and in another state.

This policy applies to employees, students, vendors/contractors and others who do business with the District, as well as school volunteers, visitors, guests and other third parties.

For purposes of this policy, and as defined in 5400.05, Section M, harassment and/or bullying shall mean threats, intimidation or abuse via communication (verbal, written, graphic or electronic*) and/or physical conduct that

- a) creates of a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation or abuse, including cyberbullying as defined in Education Law §11(8), that
 - (a) has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional or physical well-being; or
 - (b) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety; or
 - (c) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to a student.

Such definition includes acts of harassment, including bullying, that occur: (i) on school property; and/or (ii) at a school function; and/or (iii) off school property and creates or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property.

For purposes of this definition, the term “threats, intimidation or abuse” shall include verbal and non-verbal actions.

Acts of harassment and bullying that are prohibited include those acts based on a person’s actual or perceived membership in the following groups including, but not limited to: race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender (which includes a person’s actual or perceived sex, as well as gender identity and expression).

- b) Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or is used as a basis for employment decisions (including terms and conditions of employment) affecting such individual; and/or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Such communication or physical conduct includes but is not limited to communication or physical conduct on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, political affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, military status, veteran status, disability, use of a recognized guide dog, hearing dog or service dog or domestic violence victim status;
- c) Otherwise adversely affects the employment and/or educational opportunities and benefits provided by the District.

In accordance with the Dignity for All Students Act, the Board of Education shall also appoint a Dignity Act Coordinator for each school building. The Dignity Act Coordinator in each school building will be thoroughly trained to handle human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (identity or expression) and sex. Each Coordinator shall be employed by the Mahopac Central School District, and be licensed and/or certified by the Commissioner as a classroom teacher, school counselor, school psychologist, school nurse, school social worker, school administrator or supervisor, or superintendent of schools. The Board of Education shall share the names and contact information of the Dignity Act Coordinator for each school building with all school personnel, students, and parents/persons in parental relation.

NOTE: New Regulation of the Commissioner of Education requires every school district to list the names and contact information of each building Dignity Act Coordinator in its Code of Conduct.

List the name of each Dignity Act Coordinator with his/her contact information and indicate the school building(s) for which such individual is a Dignity Act Coordinator.

***Electronic communication devices are any conduit to informational services such as the internet or cellular services. This would include, but is not limited to, email, social networking sites, electronic bulletin boards, instant messaging, and text messaging.**

All students who are witnesses to, or subjected to, incidents of discrimination, harassment and/or bullying by another student, by any District staff and/or by any other visitor on school property or at a school function, are

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expected to promptly report the matter to the Dignity Act Coordinator, a teacher, guidance counselor, the building principal or his or her designee.

All parents and/or visitors who are witnesses to, or receive a report of, a violation of the code of conduct or discrimination, harassment and/or bullying by a student, by a District staff member and/or by any other visitor on school property or at a school function, are expected to promptly report the matter to District staff.

School employees who witness discrimination, harassment and/or bullying, or receive an oral or written report of such acts shall promptly orally notify the principal, superintendent, or their designee not later than one (1) school day after such employee witnesses or receives a report of such acts, and shall also file a written report with the principal, superintendent, or their designee no later than two (2) school days after making an oral report.

The Building Principal, Superintendent or the Building Principal's or Superintendent's designee will act to promptly investigate all complaints, either verbal or written, formal or informal, of allegations of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination based on any of the characteristics described above; and will promptly take appropriate action to protect individuals from further harassment, bullying and/or discrimination. The Building Principal, Superintendent or the Building Principal's or Superintendent's designee shall lead or supervise the thorough investigation of all reports of discrimination, harassment and/or bullying, and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports. The Building Principal, Superintendent or the Building Principal's or Superintendent's designee shall promptly notify the School District's Dignity Act Coordinator or Complaint Officer of any complaints he/she receives of significant allegations of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination based on any of the characteristics described above.

The School District's Dignity Act Coordinator or Complaint Officer will act to promptly investigate all serious complaints, either verbal or written, formal or informal, of allegations of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination based on any of the characteristics described above; and will promptly take appropriate action to protect individuals from further harassment, bullying and/or discrimination. The Board, upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, will designate, at a minimum, two (2) Complaint Officers, one of each gender (if possible).

In order for the Board to enforce this policy, and to take corrective measures as may be necessary, it is essential that any student, who believes he/she has been a victim of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination in the school environment and/or at programs, activities and events under the control and supervision of the District, as well as any individual who is aware of and/or who has knowledge of, or witnesses any possible occurrence of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination immediately report such alleged harassment, bullying and/or discrimination; such report shall be directed to the Building Principal, Superintendent or the Building Principal's or Superintendent's designee; the Building Principal, Superintendent or the Building Principal's or Superintendent's designee shall forward reports of significant allegations of alleged harassment, bullying and/or discrimination to the District's designated Dignity Act Coordinator or Complaint Officer through informal and/or formal complaint procedures as developed by the District. Such complaints are recommended to be in writing, although verbal complaints of alleged harassment, bullying and/or discrimination will also be promptly investigated in accordance with the terms of this policy. In the event that the Building Principal, Superintendent, the Building Principal's or Superintendent's designee and/or the Dignity Act Coordinator or Complaint Officer is the alleged offender, the report may be directed to the next level of supervisory authority.

Upon receipt of an informal/formal complaint (even an anonymous complaint), the District shall conduct a thorough investigation of the charges. However, even in the absence of an informal/formal complaint, if the District has knowledge of any occurrence of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination the District will investigate such conduct promptly and thoroughly. To the extent possible, within legal constraints, all complaints will be treated as confidentially and privately as possible. However, disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation of the charges and/or to notify law enforcement officials as warranted, and any disclosure will be provided on a "need to know" basis.

Based upon the results of this investigation, if the District determines that an employee and/or student has violated the terms of this policy and/or accompanying regulations, immediate corrective action will be taken as

warranted. Such corrective action shall be reasonably calculated to end the discrimination, harassment and/or bullying, eliminate any hostile environment, create a more positive school culture and climate, prevent recurrence of the behavior, and ensure the safety of the student or students against whom such behavior was directed. Should the offending individual be a student, appropriate disciplinary measures will be applied, up to and including suspension, in accordance with applicable laws and/or regulations, District policy and regulation, and the District Code of Conduct. Should the offending individual be a school employee, appropriate disciplinary measures will be applied, up to and including termination of the offender's employment, in accordance with legal guidelines, District policy and regulation, and the applicable collective bargaining agreement(s). Third parties (such as school volunteers, vendors, etc.) who are found to have violated this policy and/or accompanying regulations and/or the Code of Conduct, will be subject to appropriate sanctions as warranted and in compliance with law. The application of such disciplinary measures by the District does not preclude the filing of civil and/or criminal charges as may be warranted. The Building Principal, Superintendent, or their designees shall notify promptly the appropriate local law enforcement agency when it is believed that any discrimination, harassment and/or bullying constitutes criminal conduct.

The Building Principal shall provide a regular report, at least once during each school year, on data and trends related to discrimination, harassment and/or bullying to the superintendent.

Prohibition of Retaliatory Behavior (Commonly Known as "Whistle-Blower" Protection)

The Board prohibits any retaliatory behavior directed against complainants, victims, witnesses, and/or any other individuals who participated in the investigation of a complaint of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination.

Follow-up inquiries shall be made to ensure that harassment, bullying and/or discrimination has not resumed and that all those involved in the investigation of the harassment, bullying and/or discrimination complaint have not suffered retaliation.

Finding That Harassment, Bullying and/or Discrimination Did Not Occur

At any level/stage of investigation of alleged harassment, bullying and/or discrimination if a determination is made that harassment, bullying and/or discrimination did not occur, the Building Principal Superintendent, the Building Principal's or Superintendent's designee and/or the Dignity Act Coordinator or Complaint Officer will so notify the complainant, the alleged offender and the Superintendent of this determination. Such a finding does not preclude the complainant from filing an appeal pursuant to District policy or regulation and/or pursuing other legal avenues of recourse.

However, even if a determination is made that harassment, bullying and/or discrimination did not occur, the Superintendent/designee reserves the right to initiate staff awareness and training as well as District-wide remedial measures, as applicable, to help ensure that the school community is not conducive to fostering harassment, bullying and/or discrimination.

In all cases, the Superintendent will inform the Board of Education of the results of each investigation involving a finding that harassment, bullying and/or discrimination did not occur.

Knowingly Makes False Accusations

Employees and/or students who *knowingly* make false accusations against another individual as to allegations of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination may also face appropriate disciplinary action.

Privacy Rights

As part of any investigation, the District has the right to search all school property and equipment including District computers, rooms, desk, cabinets, lockers, and/or other school storage places. Rooms, desks, cabinets, lockers, computers, and/or other school storage places are provided by the District for the use of staff and

students, but the users do not have exclusive use of these locations or equipment and should not expect that materials stored therein will be private.

Development and Dissemination of Administrative Regulations

Regulations will be developed for reporting, investigating, and remedying allegations of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination based on the characteristics described above. An appeal procedure will also be provided to address any unresolved complaints and/or unsatisfactory prior determinations by the applicable Building Principal, Superintendent, the Building Principal's or Superintendent's designee and/or the Dignity Act Coordinator or Complaint Officer . Such regulations will be developed in accordance with federal and state law as well as any applicable collective bargaining agreement(s).

The Superintendent/designee(s) will affirmatively discuss the topics of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination with all employees and students, express the District's condemnation of such conduct, and explain the sanctions for such conduct. Appropriate training and/or "awareness" programs will be established for staff and students to help ensure knowledge of and familiarity with the issues pertaining to harassment, bullying and/or discrimination in the schools, and to disseminate preventative measures to help reduce such incidents of prohibited conduct. Furthermore, special training will be provided for designated supervisors and managerial employees, Building Principals, Superintendent, the Building Principals' or Superintendent's designee and/or the Dignity Act Coordinators or Complaint Officer , as may be necessary, for the investigation of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination complaints.

This policy of anti-harassment, anti-bullying and anti-discrimination should not be read to abrogate other District policies and/or regulations or the District Code of Conduct prohibiting other forms of unlawful discrimination, inappropriate behavior, and/or hate crimes within this District. It is the intent of the District that all such policies and/or regulations be read consistently to provide the highest level of protection from unlawful discrimination in the provision of employment/educational services and opportunities. However, different treatment of any employees, students or other persons which has a legitimate, legal and nondiscriminatory reason shall not be considered a violation of District policy.

5300.27 The Dignity Act

The mission Of Mahopac Central School District is to ensure that every student in our schools acquire the skills, knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills that will permit him or her to operate effectively in the broader community and lead a successful productive life in a changing world.

The Mahopac Central School District has made it its mission to provide safe, positive, and productive learning experiences for its students, at every level. Therefore it shall be the policy of the Mahopac Board of Education to maintain a productive educational environment in which bullying, including cyber-bullying, discrimination and harassment are not tolerated. As such, the Mahopac Central School District strictly prohibits all forms of harassment and/or bullying of students by students or staff. Additionally, the Mahopac Central School District strictly prohibits all forms of discrimination of students, by students or staff, based upon a student's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, age, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (identity or expression) or sex.

Harassment and/or bullying, as defined in 5400.05, Section M, shall mean the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation or abuse, including cyber-bullying, that (a) has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional or physical well-being; or (b) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety; (c) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to a student; or (d) occurs off school property and creates or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property. Acts of harassment and bullying shall include, but not be limited to, those acts based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex. For the purposes of this definition the term "threats, intimidation or abuse" shall include verbal and nonverbal actions.

The scope of this policy shall include any actions that take place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or that take place off of school grounds but that are designed to or have the effect of interfering with a student's ability to attend school and/or to be educated in a safe, non-hostile environment."

The Board of Education shall appoint a Dignity Act Coordinator for each school building and share the names and contact information with all school personnel, students, and parents/guardians. The Dignity Act Coordinator shall be thoroughly trained to handle human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (identity or expression) and sex. If a Dignity Act Coordinator vacates his/her position, another school employee shall immediately be designated for an interim appointment as Coordinator, pending approval from the Board of Education, within thirty (30) days of the date the position was vacated. In the event a Coordinator is unable to perform the duties of the position for an extended period of time, another school employee shall immediately be designated for an interim appointment as Coordinator, pending return of the previous Coordinator to the position.

It is the responsibility of all staff members to take reasonable measures to prevent acts of bullying, cyber-bullying, discrimination or harassment and to report any such acts to a school administrator. Similarly, it is the responsibility of students who observe any acts of bullying, cyber-bullying, discrimination or harassment to report them to school personnel. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the District's policies and regulations, the Mahopac Central School District's Code of Conduct, applicable collective bargaining agreements and all appropriate federal or state laws.

If, after an investigation, it is determined that bullying, cyber-bullying, discrimination, or harassment has occurred, swift and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the District's policies and regulations, the Mahopac Central School District's Code of Conduct, applicable collective bargaining agreements and all appropriate federal or state laws. The Superintendent or his/her designee is directed to

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regularly review the procedures employed by the MCS D regarding reporting, investigating, and addressing allegations of bullying, cyber-bullying, discrimination and harassment, including communications with all subsequent parties involved. These procedures will be aligned with all appropriate federal or state laws, the Mahopac Central School District's Code of Conduct and shall be applied consistently across the District. The Dignity Act Coordinator in each school shall document and report material incidents of discrimination, bullying and/or harassment to the Superintendent as required by state regulation.

If the alleged behavior may constitute, or constitutes, a crime, the appropriate authorities shall be notified by the District immediately.

There will be no tolerance for any individual who attempts to retaliate against any person who reports acts of bullying, harassment and/or discrimination. Likewise, retaliation against those who testify, or participate, in a bullying, discrimination or harassment investigation will not be tolerated. Accordingly, the District strictly prohibits any such retaliation.

“Any individual who makes a false report may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the District's policies and regulations, the Mahopac Central School District's Code of Conduct, applicable collective bargaining agreements and all appropriate federal or state laws. Also, the Board prohibits individuals from knowingly reporting false incidents of bullying, harassment and/or discrimination. Any individual(s) who make false reports will be subject to disciplinary actions as stated within the district Code of Conduct.

The District will also provide training to staff and students with regard to bullying, harassment and discrimination prevention and intervention. A copy of this policy, in plain language, will be given to all personnel, all students, and students' parents or guardians. Finally, this policy will be posted in appropriate places. The District shall also provide training to staff and students that discourages the development of discrimination, harassment and bullying. Such training shall raise staff and student awareness and sensitivity to potential discrimination, harassment or bullying, as well as enable staff to prevent and respond to discrimination, harassment or bullying.

In addition, student instruction regarding "tolerance," "respect for others" and "dignity" shall include awareness and sensitivity to discrimination, bullying and/or harassment and civility in the relations of people of different races, weights, national origins, ethnic groups, religions, religious practices, mental or physical abilities, sexual orientations, genders and sexes.

5300.30 REPORTING VIOLATIONS

All students are expected to report violations of the code of conduct to a teacher, guidance counselor, the Building Principal or his or her designee. Any student observing a student possessing a weapon, alcohol or illegal substance on school property or at a school function shall report this information immediately to a teacher, the Principal, the Principal's designee or the Superintendent of Schools. All students who are witnesses to, or subjected to, incidents of discrimination, harassment and/or bullying by another student, by any District staff and/or by any other visitor on school property or at a school function, are expected to promptly report the matter to a teacher, guidance counselor, the building principal or his or her designee.

After witnessing, or receiving a report of, a violation of the Code of Conduct or of discrimination, harassment and/or bullying against any student, all district staff that are authorized to impose disciplinary sanctions are expected to investigate the situation and impose appropriate disciplinary sanction as necessary in a prompt, fair and lawful manner. After witnessing, or receiving a report of, a violation of the Code of Conduct or of discrimination, harassment and/or bullying against any student, District staff who are not authorized to impose disciplinary sanctions are expected to promptly report violations of the code of conduct and/or incidents of discrimination, harassment and/or bullying against any student to their supervisor, who shall in turn investigate the situation and impose an appropriate disciplinary sanction, if so authorized, or refer the matter to a District staff member who is authorized to investigate the situation and impose an appropriate sanction.

All parents and/or visitors who are witnesses to, or receive a report of, a violation of the Code of Conduct or discrimination, harassment and/or bullying by a student, by a District staff member and/or by any other visitor on school property or at a school function, are expected to promptly report the matter to District staff.

Any weapon, alcohol or illegal substance found shall be confiscated immediately, if possible, followed by notification to the parent of the student involved and the appropriate disciplinary sanction, which may include permanent suspension and referral for prosecution.

The Principal or his/her designee must notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency of those code violations that constitute a crime and substantially affect the order or security of a school as soon as practical, but in no event later than the close of business the day the Principal or his/her designee learns of the violation. The notification may be made by telephone, followed by a letter mailed on same day as the telephone call is made. The notification must identify the student and explain the conduct that violated the code of conduct and constituted a crime.

It is essential that all targets and persons with knowledge of incidents of discrimination, harassment and/or bullying report such behavior as soon as possible after the incident so that it may be effectively investigated and resolved. The Mahopac Central School District will promptly and equitably investigate all complaints, formal or informal, verbal or written. In order to assist investigators, individuals should document any incident of discrimination, harassment and/or bullying as soon as it occurs and with as much detail as possible including: the nature of the incident(s); dates, times, places it has occurred; name of perpetrator(s); witnesses to the incident(s); and the target's response to the incident. If, after appropriate investigation, the Mahopac Central School District finds that a student, a District staff member or a third party has violated the Code of Conduct, prompt corrective action and possibly disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with this Code of Conduct, applicable collective bargaining agreements, district policy and state law.

5300.35 DISCIPLINARY PENALTIES, PROCEDURES AND REFERRALS

Discipline is most effective when it deals directly with the problem at the time and place it occurs, and in a way that students view as fair and impartial. School personnel who interact with students are expected to use disciplinary action only when necessary and to place emphasis on the students' ability to grow in self-discipline.

Disciplinary action, when necessary, will be firm, fair and consistent so as to be the most effective in changing student behavior. In determining the appropriate disciplinary action, school personnel authorized to impose disciplinary penalties will consider the following:

1. The student's age.
2. The nature of the offense and the circumstances which led to the offense.
3. The student's prior disciplinary record.
4. The effectiveness of other forms of discipline.
5. Information from parents, teachers and/or others, as appropriate.
6. Other extenuating circumstances.

As a general rule, discipline will be progressive. This means that a student's first violation will usually merit a lighter penalty than subsequent violations.

If the conduct of a student with a disability is related to his/her disability or suspected disability, the student shall be referred to the Committee on Special Education and discipline, if warranted, shall be administered consistent with the separate requirements of this code of conduct for disciplining students with a disability or presumed to have a disability.

A. Penalties

Students who are found to have violated the district's code of conduct may be subject to the following penalties, either alone or in combination. The school personnel identified after each penalty are authorized to impose that penalty, consistent with the student's right to due process.

1. Oral warning – any member of the district staff
2. Written warning – bus drivers, hall and lunch monitors, coaches, guidance counselors, teachers, Principal, Superintendent
3. Written notification to parent – bus driver, hall and lunch monitors, coaches, guidance counselors, teachers, Principal, Superintendent
4. Detention – teachers, Principal, Superintendent
5. Suspension from transportation – Director of Transportation, Principal, Superintendent
6. Suspension from athletic participation – coaches, Principal, Superintendent
7. Suspension from social or extracurricular activities – activity director, Principal, Superintendent
8. Suspension of other privileges – Principal, Superintendent
9. In-school suspension – Principal, Superintendent
10. Removal from classroom by teacher – teachers, Principal
11. Short-term (five days or less) suspension from school – Principal, Superintendent, Board
12. Long-term (more than five days) suspension from school – Superintendent, Board
13. Permanent suspension from school – Superintendent, Board.

B. Procedures

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

Students who are to be given penalties other than an oral warning, written warning or written notification to their parents are entitled to additional rights before the penalty is imposed. These additional rights are explained below.

1. Detention

Teachers, Principals and the Superintendent may use after school detention as a penalty for student misconduct in situations where removal from the classroom or suspension would be inappropriate. Detention will be imposed as a penalty only after the student's parent has been notified.

2. Suspension from transportation

If a student does not conduct himself/herself properly on a bus, the bus driver is expected to bring such misconduct to the Principal's attention. Students who become a serious disciplinary problem may have their riding privileges suspended by the Principal or the Superintendent or their designees.

In such cases, the student's parent will become responsible for seeing that his or her child gets to and from school safely. Should the suspension from transportation amount to a suspension from attendance, the district will make appropriate arrangements to provide for the student's education.

A student subjected to a suspension from transportation is not entitled to a full hearing pursuant to Education Law §3214. However, the student and the student's parent will be provided with a reasonable opportunity for an informal conference with the Principal or the Principal's designee to discuss the conduct and the penalty involved.

3. Suspension from athletic participation, extra-curricular activities and other privileges

A student subjected to a suspension from athletic participation, extra-curricular activities or other privileges is not entitled to a full hearing pursuant to Education Law §3214. However, the student and the student's parent will be provided with a reasonable opportunity for an informal conference with the district official imposing the suspension to discuss the conduct and the penalty involved.

4. In-school Suspension

The Board recognizes the school must balance the need of students to attend school and the need for order in the classroom to establish an environment conducive to learning. As such, the Board authorizes Principals and the Superintendent to place students who would otherwise be suspended from school as the result of a code of conduct violation in "in-school suspension." The in-school suspension teacher will be a certified teacher.

A student subjected to an in-school suspension is not entitled to a full hearing pursuant to Education Law §3214. However, the student and the student's parent will be provided with a reasonable opportunity for an informal conference with the district official imposing the in-school suspension to discuss the conduct and the penalty involved.

5. Teacher Disciplinary Removal of Disruptive Students

A student's behavior can affect a teacher's ability to teach and can make it difficult for other students in the classroom to learn. In most instances the classroom teacher can control a student's behavior and maintain or restore control over the classroom by using good classroom management techniques. These techniques may include practices that involve the teacher directing a student to briefly leave the classroom to give the student an opportunity to regain his or her composure and self-control in an alternative setting. Such practices may include, but are not limited to: (1) short-term "time out" in an elementary classroom or in an administrator's office; (2) sending a student into the hallway briefly; (3) sending a student to the Principal's office for the remainder of the class time only; or (4) sending a student to a guidance counselor or other district staff member for counseling. Time-honored classroom management techniques such as these do not constitute disciplinary removals for purposes of this code.

On occasion, a student's behavior may become disruptive. For purposes of this code of conduct, a disruptive student is a student who is substantially disruptive of the educational process or substantially interferes with the teacher's authority over the classroom. A substantial disruption of the educational process or substantial interference with a teacher's authority occurs when a student demonstrates a persistent unwillingness to comply with the teacher's instructions or repeatedly violates the teacher's classroom behavior rules.

A classroom teacher may remove a disruptive student from class for up to two days. The removal from class applies to the class of the removing teacher only.

If the disruptive student does not pose a danger or ongoing threat of disruption to the academic process, the teacher must provide the student with an explanation for why he or she is being removed and an opportunity to explain his or her version of the relevant events before the student is removed. Only after the informal discussion may a teacher remove a student from class.

If the student poses a danger or ongoing threat of disruption, the teacher may order the student to be removed immediately. The teacher must, however, explain to the student why he or she was removed from the classroom and give the student a chance to present his or her version of the relevant events within 24-hours.

The teacher must complete a district-established disciplinary removal form and meet with the Principal or his or her designee as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the school day, to explain the circumstances of the removal and to present the removal form. If the Principal or designee is not available by the end of the same school day, the teacher must leave the form with the secretary and meet with the Principal or designee prior to the beginning of classes on the next school day.

Within 24 hours after the student's removal, the Principal or another district administrator designated by the Principal must notify the student's parent, in writing, that the student has been removed from class and why. The notice must also inform the parent that he or she has the right, upon request, to meet informally with the Principal or the Principal's designee to discuss the reasons for the removal.

The written notice must be provided by personal delivery, express mail delivery, or some other means that is reasonably calculated to assure receipt of the notice within 24 hours of the student's removal at the last known address for the parent. Where possible, notice should also be provided by telephone if the school has been provided with a telephone number(s) for the purpose of contacting parents.

The Principal may require the teacher who ordered the removal to attend the informal conference.

If at the informal meeting the student denies the charges, the Principal or the Principal's designee must explain why the student was removed and give the student and the student's parents a chance to present the student's version of the relevant events. The informal meeting must be held within 48 hours of the student's removal. The timing of the informal meeting may be extended by mutual agreement of the parent and Principal.

The Principal or the Principal's designee may overturn the removal of the student from class if the Principal finds any one of the following:

1. The charges against the student are not supported by substantial evidence.
2. The student's removal is otherwise in violation of law, including the district's code of conduct.
3. The conduct warrants suspension from school pursuant to Education Law § 3214 and a suspension will be imposed.

The Principal or his/her designee may overturn a removal at any point between receiving the referral form issued by the teacher and the close of business on the day following the 48-hour period for the informal conference, if a conference is requested. No student removed from the classroom by the classroom teacher will be permitted to return to the classroom until the Principal makes a final determination, or the period of removal expires, whichever is less.

Any disruptive student removed from the classroom by the classroom teacher shall be offered continued educational programming and activities until he or she is permitted to return to the classroom.

Each teacher must keep a complete log (on a district provided form) for all cases of removal of students

from his/her class. The Principal must keep a log of all removals of students from class.

Removal of a student with a disability, under certain circumstances, may constitute a change in the student's placement. Accordingly, no teacher may remove a student with a disability from his or her class until he or she has verified with the Principal or the chairperson of the Committee on Special Education that the removal will not violate the student's rights under state or federal law or regulation.

6. Suspension from School

Suspension from school is a severe penalty, which may be imposed only upon students who are insubordinate, disorderly, violent or disruptive, or whose conduct otherwise endangers the safety, morals, health or welfare of others.

The Board retains its authority to suspend students, but places primary responsibility for the suspension of students with the Superintendent and the Principals.

Any staff member may recommend to the Superintendent or the Principal that a student be suspended. All staff members must immediately report and refer a violent student to the Principal or the Superintendent for a violation of the code of conduct. All recommendations and referrals shall be made in writing unless the conditions underlying the recommendation or referral warrant immediate attention. In such cases a written report is to be prepared as soon as possible by the staff member recommending the suspension.

The Superintendent or Principal, upon receiving a recommendation or referral for suspension or when processing a case for suspension, shall gather the facts relevant to the matter and record them for subsequent presentation, if necessary.

a. Short term (five days or less) Suspension from School

When the Superintendent or Principal (referred to as the "suspending authority") proposes to suspend a student charged with misconduct for five days or less pursuant to Education Law §3214(3), the suspending authority must immediately notify the student orally. If the student denies the misconduct, the suspending authority must provide an explanation of the basis for the proposed suspension. The suspending authority must also notify the student's parents in writing that the student may be suspended from school. The written notice must be provided by personal delivery, express mail delivery, or some other means that is reasonably calculated to assure receipt of the notice within 24 hours of the decision to propose suspension at the last known address for the parents. Where possible, notice should also be provided by telephone if the school has been provided with a telephone number(s) for the purpose of contacting the parents.

The notice shall provide a description of the charges against the student and the incident for which suspension is proposed and shall inform the parents of the right to request an immediate informal conference with the Principal. Both the notice and informal conference shall be in the dominant language or mode of communication used by the parents. At the conference, the parents shall be permitted to ask questions of complaining witnesses under such procedures as the Principal may establish.

The notice and opportunity for an informal conference shall take place before the student is suspended unless the student's presence in school poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disruption to the academic process. If the student's presence does pose such a danger or threat of disruption, the notice and opportunity for an informal conference shall take place as soon after the suspension as is reasonably practicable.

After the conference, the Principal shall promptly advise the parents verbally of his or her decision. If the parents (they) are not satisfied with the decision and wish to pursue the matter, they must file a written appeal to the Superintendent within five business days, unless they can show good cause for the delay in doing so. The Superintendent shall issue a written decision regarding the appeal within 10 business days of receiving the appeal. If the parents are not satisfied with the Superintendent's decision, they may file a written appeal to the Board of Education with the District Clerk within 30 calendar days of the date of the Superintendent's decision, unless they can show good cause for the delay in filing the appeal. Only final decisions of the Board may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education within 30 calendar days of the decision.

b. Long term (more than five days) Suspension from School

When the Superintendent or Principal determines that a suspension for more than five days may be warranted, he or she shall give reasonable notice to the student and the student's parents of their right to a fair hearing. At the hearing the student shall have the right to be represented by counsel, the right to question witnesses against him or her and the right to present witnesses and other evidence on his or her behalf.

The Superintendent shall personally hear and determine the proceeding or may, in his or her discretion, designate a hearing officer to conduct the hearing. The hearing officer shall be authorized to administer oaths and to issue subpoenas in conjunction with the proceeding before him or her. A record of the hearing shall be maintained, but no stenographic transcript shall be required. A tape recording shall be deemed a satisfactory record. The hearing officer shall make findings of fact and recommendations as to the appropriate measure of discipline to the Superintendent. The report of the hearing officer shall be advisory only, and the Superintendent may accept all or any part thereof.

An appeal of the decision of the Superintendent may be made to the Board that will make its decision based solely upon the record before it. All appeals to the Board must be in writing and submitted to the District Clerk within 30 calendar days of the date of the Superintendent's decision, unless the parents can show good cause for the delay in filing the appeal. The Board may adopt in whole or in part the decision of the Superintendent. Final decisions of the Board may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education within 30 days of the decision.

c. Permanent suspension

Permanent suspension is reserved for extraordinary circumstances such as where a student's conduct poses a life-threatening danger to the safety and well-being of other students, school personnel or any other person lawfully on school property or attending a school function.

C. Minimum Periods of Suspension

1. Students who bring a weapon to school

Any student, other than a student with a disability, found guilty of bringing a weapon onto school property will be subject to suspension from school for at least one calendar year. Before being suspended, the student will have an opportunity for a hearing pursuant to Education Law §3214. The Superintendent has the authority to modify the one-year suspension on a case-by-case basis. In deciding whether to modify the penalty, the Superintendent may consider the following:

1. The student's age.
2. The student's grade in school.
3. The student's prior disciplinary record.
4. The Superintendent's belief that other forms of discipline may be more effective.
5. Input from parents, teachers and/or others.
6. Other extenuating circumstances.

A student with a disability may be suspended in accordance with Section 5300.50 of this Code and the requirements of state and federal law.

2. Students who commit violent acts other than bringing a weapon to school

Any student, who is found to have committed a violent act, other than bringing a weapon onto school property, shall be subject to suspension from school for at least five days. A student with a disability may be suspended in accordance with Section 5300.50 of this Code of Conduct and the requirements of state and federal laws. If the proposed penalty is the minimum five-day suspension, the student and the student's parent will be given the same notice and opportunity for an informal conference given to all students subject to a short-term suspension. If the proposed penalty exceeds the minimum five-day

suspension, the student and the student's parent will be given the same notice and opportunity for a hearing given to all students subject to a long-term suspension. The Superintendent has the authority to modify the minimum five-day suspension on a case-by-case basis. In deciding whether to modify the penalty, the Superintendent may consider the same factors considered in modifying a one-year suspension for possessing a weapon.

3. Students who repeatedly substantially disrupt the educational process or repeatedly substantially interfere with the teacher's authority over the classroom

Any student, who repeatedly substantially disrupts the educational process or substantially interferes with the teacher's authority over the classroom will be suspended from school for at least five days. A student with a disability may be suspended in accordance with Section 5300.45 of this Code of Conduct and the requirements of state and federal laws. For purposes of this code of conduct, "repeatedly substantially disrupts" means engaging in conduct that results in the student being removed from the classroom by teacher(s) pursuant to Education Law §3214 (3-a) and this code on four or more occasions during a semester, or three or more occasions during a trimester. If the proposed penalty is the minimum five-day suspension, the student and the student's parent will be given the same notice and opportunity for an informal conference given to all students subject to a short-term suspension. If the proposed penalty exceeds the minimum five-day suspension, the student and the student's parent will be given the same notice and opportunity for a hearing given to all students subject to a long-term suspension. The Superintendent has the authority to modify the minimum five-day suspension on a case-by-case basis. In deciding whether to modify the penalty, the Superintendent may consider the same factors considered in modifying a one-year suspension for possessing a weapon.

D. Referrals

1. Counseling

The Guidance Office shall handle all referrals of students to counseling.

2. PINS Petitions

The district may file a PINS (person in need of supervision) petition in Family Court on any student under the age of 18 who demonstrates that he or she requires supervision and treatment by:

- a. Being habitually truant and not attending school as required by part one of Article 65 of the Education Law.
- b. Engaging in an ongoing or continual course of conduct which makes the student ungovernable, or habitually disobedient and beyond the lawful control of the school.
- c. Knowingly and unlawfully possesses marijuana or other illegal substances in violation of Penal Law §221.05. A single violation of §221.05 will be a sufficient basis for filing a PINS petition.

3. Juvenile Delinquents and Juvenile Offenders

The Superintendent is required to refer the following students to the County Attorney for a juvenile delinquency proceeding before the Family Court:

- a. Any student under the age of 16 who is found to have brought a weapon to school, or
- b. Any student 14 or 15 years old who qualifies for juvenile offender status under the Criminal Procedure Law §1.20 (42).

The Superintendent is required to refer students age 16 and older or any student 14 or 15 years old who qualifies for juvenile offender status to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

E. Remedial Measures

In order to create and maintain a positive learning environment for all students, the Mahopac Central School District believes that certain remedies and procedures which focus on intervention and education should be utilized. Such remedial measures are designed to correct the problem behavior, prevent another occurrence of the behavior, and protect the target of the act(s). District staff is authorized to provide for:

1. Peer support groups, corrective instruction and/or other relevant learning or service experiences;
2. Supportive intervention and/or mediation where constructive conflict resolution is modeled;
3. Behavioral assessment(s) and/or evaluation(s);
4. Behavioral management plans or behavior contracts, with benchmarks that are closely monitored; and/or
5. Student counseling and parent conferences that focus on involving persons in parental relations in discipline issues.
6. Assignment of an adult mentor at school that the student checks in with at the beginning and end of each school day;
7. Corrective instruction that reemphasizes behavioral expectations or other relevant learning or service experience;
8. Engagement of student in a reflective activity, such as writing an essay about the misbehavior and its impact on others and how the student might handle the situation differently in the future and/or make amends to those who have been harmed

5300.40 ALTERNATIVE INSTRUCTION

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

5300.45 ATHLETIC AND CO-CURRICULAR CODE OF CONDUCT

This Athletic and Co-Curricular Code of Conduct is written with the understanding that athletic and co-curricular activities at the Middle School and High School are integral parts of the overall educational program of the Mahopac Central School District. Participation in these activities is a privilege granted to students who maintain scholarship and citizenship within the rules and regulations of the District. The District believes that it is imperative that parents and the school district work together to set high expectations for student behavior both on and off campus, regardless of whether the athletics and co-curricular activities are in season/session.

The District expects that all students who participate in athletics and/or co-curricular activities will uphold the high standards of academic eligibility and abide by the rules specified by their coach/advisor. As participants in athletic and/or co-curricular activities, students must comply with all the provisions in the District's Code of Conduct and, in addition, pledge to act in season/session and out-of-season/session as follows:

1. Not to use, possess, buy and/or distribute tobacco products in any form, including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco and/or snuff.
2. Not to consume, possess, buy and/or distribute alcoholic beverages.
3. Not to use, possess, buy and/or distribute illegal drugs, controlled substances and/or related paraphernalia.
4. Not to use, possess, buy and/or distribute prescription drugs without a prescription.
5. Not to use, possess, buy and/or distribute over-the-counter drugs, household products and/or other products with the intent to "get high".
6. Not to use, possess, buy and/or distribute performance-enhancing drugs or steroids.
7. Not to commit a crime (misdemeanor and/or felony).
8. Not to engage in hazing of other students.
9. Not to engage in behavior that brings dishonor to the District.

Any violation found after a proper investigation by school authorities will result in disciplinary action in accordance with this Athletic and Co-Curricular Code of Conduct. Penalties are listed on the chart that follows:

Behavior	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense or More
1. Use, possess, buy, and/or distribute tobacco products.	Ineligible to participate in athletic and/or co-curricular activities for three (3) school days.	Ineligible to participate in athletic and/or co-curricular activities for five (5) school days.	Ineligible to participate in athletic and/or co-curricular activities for ten (10) school days.
2. Consume, possess, buy and/or distribute alcoholic beverages. 3. Use, possess, buy and/or distribute illegal drugs, controlled substances and/or related paraphernalia. 4. Use, possess, buy and/or distribute prescription drugs without a prescription. 5. Use, possess, buy and/or distribute over the counter drugs, household products and/or other products with intent to "get high". 6. Use, possess, buy and/or distribute performance-enhancing drugs or steroids.	A. Suspension from participation in the athletic team(s) and/or co-curricular activity(ies) for 20% of the season(s) or activity(ies). B. Team captains and organization officers' positions will be revoked. C. 25 hours of in-school community service that needs to be completed within a three (3) school month period. D. School parking privileges suspended for one (1) school month.	A. Suspension from participation in the athletic team(s) and/or co-curricular activity(ies) for six (6) school months (excluding summer). B. Team captains and organization officers' positions will be revoked. C. 50 hours of in-school community service that needs to be completed within the six (6) school month period. D. School parking privileges suspended for two (2) school months.	Banned from participation in all athletic teams and co-curricular activities for the rest of school career.
7. Commission of a crime (misdemeanor and/or felony), for which student has pled or been found guilty.	Suspended from participation in all athletic teams and/or co-curricular activities for one (1) school year.	Banned from participation in all athletic teams and co-curricular activities for the rest of school career.	Banned from participation in all athletic teams and co-curricular activities for the rest of school career.
8. Hazing	A. Warning, and/or B. Probation, and/or C. Specified period of suspension from the athletic team(s) and/or co-curricular activity(ies), and/or D. Banned from participation in all athletic teams and co-curricular activities for the rest of school career.	A. Warning, and/or B. Probation, and/or C. Specified period of suspension from the athletic team(s) and/or co-curricular activity(ies), and/or D. Banned from participation in all athletic teams and co-curricular activities for the rest of school career.	A. Warning, and/or B. Probation, and/or C. Specified period of suspension from the athletic team(s) and/or co-curricular activity(ies), and/or D. Banned from participation in all athletic teams and co-curricular activities for the rest of school career.
9. Engage in behavior that brings dishonor to the District.	A. Warning, and/or B. Probation, and/or C. Specified period of suspension from the athletic team(s) and/or co-curricular activity(ies), and/or D. Banned from participation in all athletic teams and co-curricular activities for the rest of school career.	A. Warning, and/or B. Probation, and/or C. Specified period of suspension from the athletic team(s) and/or co-curricular activity(ies), and/or D. Banned from participation in all athletic teams and co-curricular activities for the rest of school career.	A. Warning, and/or B. Probation, and/or C. Specified period of suspension from the athletic team(s) and/or co-curricular activity(ies), and/or D. Banned from participation in all athletic teams and co-curricular activities for the rest of school career.

Notes:

- (i) Penalties shall be imposed on all of the student's athletic and co-curricular activities, including, but not limited to, athletic teams, drama, marching band, Illusion and/or student clubs. For example, if a student is and/or will be participating on an athletic team and a co-curricular club, upon a first time violation of this Code of Conduct for alcohol use, such student would be suspended from participation in his/her sport for 20% of the season (or if such violation occurs in the off-season, 20% of the upcoming active season whether in the current school year or the following school year) and would be suspended from participation in his/her full year club for 20% of the activity which equals approximately eight (8) school weeks.
- (ii) Students who receive suspensions for 20% of a season and/or activity prior to or during try-outs for athletic teams, drama, marching band and/or Illusion shall still be allowed to try-out for such athletic and co-curricular activities. For athletic teams, suspensions will begin on the Monday preceding the first athletic contest of the applicable team's (teams') season and the student will not be allowed to participate until such suspension ends. For drama members, marching band members, and Illusion, suspensions will begin upon the start of the applicable activity's (activities') regular session and the student will not be allowed to participate until such suspension ends.
- (iii) Penalties will be imposed from school year to school year, when applicable.
- (iv) Penalties may be modified based on case reviews conducted by the Superintendent of Schools, Director of Athletics, Physical Education and Health and/or the appropriate Building Principal. In conducting such case reviews, the Superintendent, Director and/or Building Principal will review the student's progress on the matter(s) that gave rise to the penalty(ies), including any attendant circumstances presented at that time by the student and his/her parents/guardians, including, but not limited to, the student's satisfactory participation in an evaluation/assessment by a licensed alcohol/drug abuse practitioner, the student's satisfactory participation in an alcohol/drug awareness meeting(s), the student's satisfactory participation in an alcohol/drug abuse program, the student's satisfactory participation in a smoking cessation program and/or efforts made by the student's parents/guardians to engage in an appropriate family support program(s) for the student.

ATHLETIC AND CO-CURRICULAR PLEDGE

The athletic and co-curricular activities at the Middle School and High School are integral parts of the overall educational program of the Mahopac Central School District. Participation in these activities is a privilege granted to students who maintain scholarship and citizenship within the rules and regulations of the District. The District believes that it is imperative that parents and the school district work together to set high expectations for student behavior both on and off campus, regardless of whether the athletics and co-curricular activities are in season/session.

The District expects that I will uphold the high standards of academic eligibility and abide by the rules specified by my coach/advisor. As a participant in an athletic and/or co-curricular activity, I will comply with all the provisions in the District’s Code of Conduct and, in addition, I pledge to act in season/session and out-of-season/session as follows:

1. Not to use, possess, buy and/or distribute tobacco products in any form, including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco and/or snuff.
2. Not to consume, possess, buy and/or distribute alcoholic beverages.
3. Not to use, possess, buy and/or distribute illegal drugs, controlled substances and/or related paraphernalia.
4. Not to use, possess, buy and/or distribute prescription drugs without a prescription.
5. Not to use, possess, buy and/or distribute over-the-counter drugs, household products and/or other products with the intent to “get high”.
6. Not to use, possess, buy and/or distribute performance-enhancing drugs or steroids.
7. Not to commit a crime (misdemeanor and/or felony).
8. Not to engage in hazing of other students.
9. Not to engage in behavior that brings dishonor to the District.

I understand that any violation of this pledge found after a proper investigation by school authorities will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Athletic and Co-Curricular Code of Conduct. I understand that I am expected to conduct myself both in school and in the community in a manner which demonstrates personal integrity and positively reflects on me and the District.

I have read the above and accept responsibility for my actions under this pledge.

Student signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgment:

I have read and understand this pledge and have explained the requirements of this pledge to my child. As the parent/guardian, I accept the responsibility to help by child meet their obligations set forth in this pledge.

Parent/Guardian signature: _____ Date: _____

Adopted by the Board of Education: August 27, 2012

5300.50 DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Board recognizes that it may be necessary to suspend, remove or otherwise discipline students with disabilities to address disruptive or problem behavior. The Board also recognizes that students with disabilities enjoy certain procedural protections whenever school authorities intend to impose discipline upon them. The Board is committed to ensuring that the procedures followed for suspending, removing or otherwise disciplining students with disabilities are consistent with the procedural safeguards required by applicable laws and regulations.

This code of conduct affords students with disabilities disciplinary action no greater or lesser rights than those expressly afforded by applicable federal and state law and regulations.

A. Authorized Suspensions or Removals of Students with Disabilities

1. For purposes of this section of the code of conduct, the following definitions apply.

A "suspension" means a suspension pursuant to Education Law §3214.

A "removal" means a removal for disciplinary reasons from the student's current educational placement other than a suspension and change in placement to an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) ordered by an impartial hearing officer because the student poses a risk of harm to himself/herself or others.

An "IAES" means a temporary educational placement for a period of up to 45 days, other than the student's current placement at the time the behavior precipitating the IAES placement occurred, that enables the student to continue to progress in the general curriculum, although in another setting, to continue to receive those services and modifications, including those described on the student's current individualized education program (IEP), that will enable the student to meet the goals set out in such IEP, and include services and modifications to address the behavior which precipitated the IAES placement that are designed to prevent the behavior from recurring.

2. School personnel may order the suspension or removal of a student with a disability from his or her current educational placement as follows:

- a. The Board, the District (BOCES) Superintendent of Schools or a Principal may order the placement of a student with a disability into an IAES, another setting or suspension for a period not to exceed five consecutive school days and not to exceed the amount of time a non-disabled student would be subject to suspension for the same behavior.
- b. The Superintendent may order the placement of a student with a disability into an IAES, another setting or suspension for up to 10 consecutive school days, inclusive of any period in which the student has been suspended or removed under subparagraph (a) above for the same behavior, if the Superintendent determines that the student has engaged in behavior that warrants a suspension and the suspension or removal does not exceed the amount of time non-disabled students would be subject to suspension for the same behavior.
- c. The Superintendent may order additional suspensions of not more than 10 consecutive school days in the same school year for separate incidents of misconduct, as long as those removals do not constitute a change of placement.
- d. The Superintendent may order the placement of a student with a disability in an IAES to be determined by the committee on special education (CSE), for the same amount of time that a student without a disability would be subject to discipline, but not more than 45 days, if the student carries or possesses a weapon to school or to a school function, or the student knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function.

- (1) "Weapon" means the same as "dangerous weapon" under 18 U.S.C. §930(g)(w) which includes "a weapon, device, instrument, material or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of causing death or serious bodily injury, except...[for] a pocket knife with a blade of less than 2 1/2 inches in length."
- (2) "Controlled substance" means a drug or other substance identified in certain provisions of the federal Controlled Substances Act specified in both federal and state law and regulations applicable to this policy.
- (3) "Illegal drugs" means a controlled substance except for those legally possessed or used under the supervision of a licensed health-care professional or that is legally possessed or used under any other authority under the Controlled Substances Act or any other federal law.

3. Subject to specified conditions required by both federal and state law and regulations, an impartial hearing officer may order the placement of a student with a disability in an IAES setting for up to 45 days at a time, if maintaining the student in his or her current educational placement poses a risk of harm to the student or others.

B. Change of Placement Rule

- 1. A disciplinary change in placement means a suspension or removal from a student's current educational placement that is either:
 - a. for more than 10 consecutive school days; or
 - b. for a period of 10 consecutive school days or less if the student is subjected to a series of suspensions or removals that constitute a pattern because they cumulate to more than 10 school days in a school year and because of such factors as the length of each suspension or removal, the total amount of time the student is removed and the proximity of the suspensions or removals to one another.
- 2. School personnel may not suspend or remove a student with disabilities if imposition of the suspension or removal would result in a disciplinary change in placement based on a pattern of suspension or removal.

However, the district may impose a suspension or removal, which would otherwise result in a disciplinary change in placement, based on a pattern of suspensions or removals if the CSE has determined that the behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability, or the student is placed in an IAES for behavior involving weapons, illegal drugs or controlled substances.

C. Special Rules Regarding the Suspension or Removal of Students with Disabilities

- 1. The district's Committee on Special Education shall:
 - a. Conduct functional behavioral assessments to determine why a student engages in a particular behavior, and develop or review behavioral intervention plans whenever the district is first suspending or removing a student with a disability for more than 10 school days in a school year or imposing a suspension or removal that constitutes a disciplinary change in placement, including a change in placement to an IAES for misconduct involving weapons, illegal drugs or controlled substances.

Subsequently, if a student with a disability who has a behavioral intervention plan and who has been suspended or removed from his or her current educational placement for more than 10 school days in a school year is subjected to a suspension or removal that does not constitute a disciplinary change in placement, the members of the CSE shall review the behavioral intervention plan and its implementation to determine if modifications are necessary.

If one or more members of the CSE believe that modifications are needed, the school district shall convene a meeting of the CSE to modify such plan and its implementation, to the extent the committee determines

necessary.

- b. Conduct a manifestation determination review of the relationship between the student's disability and the behavior subject to disciplinary action whenever a decision is made to place a student in an IAES either for misconduct involving weapons, illegal drugs or controlled substances or because maintaining the student in his current educational setting poses a risk of harm to the student or others; or a decision is made to impose a suspension that constitutes a disciplinary change in placement.
2. The parents of a student who is facing disciplinary action, but who has not been determined to be eligible for services under IDEA and Article 89 at the time of misconduct, shall have the right to invoke applicable procedural safeguards set forth in federal and state law and regulations if, in accordance with federal and state statutory and regulatory criteria, the school district is deemed to have had knowledge that their child was a student with a disability before the behavior precipitating disciplinary action occurred. If the district is deemed to have had such knowledge, the student will be considered a student presumed to have a disability for discipline purposes.
- a. The Superintendent, Principal or other school official imposing a suspension or removal shall be responsible for determining whether the student is a student presumed to have a disability.
 - b. A student will not be considered a student presumed to have a disability for discipline purposes if, upon receipt of information supporting a claim that the district had knowledge the student was a student with a disability, the district either:
 - (1) conducted an individual evaluation and determined that the student is not a student with a disability, or
 - (2) determined that an evaluation was not necessary and provided notice to the parents of such determination, in the manner required by applicable law and regulations.

If there is no basis for knowledge that the student is a student with a disability prior to taking disciplinary measures against the student, the student may be subjected to the same disciplinary measures as any other non-disabled student who engaged in comparable behaviors.

However, if a request for an individual evaluation is made while such non-disabled student is subjected to a disciplinary removal, an expedited evaluation shall be conducted and completed in the manner prescribed by applicable federal and state law and regulations. Until the expedited evaluation is completed, the non-disabled student who is not a student presumed to have a disability for discipline purposes shall remain in the educational placement determined by the district, which can include suspension.

- 3. The district shall provide parents with notice of disciplinary removal no later than the date on which a decision is made to change the placement of a student with a disability to an IAES for either misconduct involving weapons, illegal drugs or controlled substances or because maintaining the student in his/her current educational setting poses a risk of harm to the student or others; or a decision is made to impose a suspension or removal that constitutes a disciplinary change in placement. The procedural safeguards notice prescribed by the Commissioner shall accompany the notice of disciplinary removal.
- 4. The parents of a student with disabilities subject to a suspension of five consecutive school days or less shall be provided with the same opportunity for an informal conference available to parents of non-disabled students under the Education Law.
- 5. Superintendent hearings on disciplinary charges against students with disabilities subject to a suspension of more than five school days shall be bifurcated into a guilt phase and a penalty phase in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Commissioner's regulations incorporated into this code.
- 6. The removal of a student with disabilities other than a suspension or placement in an IAES shall be conducted in accordance with the due process procedures applicable to such removals of non-disabled students, except that school personnel may not impose such removal for more than 10 consecutive days or for a period that would result in a disciplinary change in placement, unless

the CSE has determined that the behavior is not a manifestation of the student's disability.

7. During any period of suspension or removal, including placement in an IAES, students with disabilities shall be provided services as required by the Commissioner's regulations incorporated into this code.

D. Expedited Due Process Hearings

1. An expedited due process hearing shall be conducted in the manner specified by the Commissioner's regulations incorporated into this code, if:
 - a. The district requests such a hearing to obtain an order of an impartial hearing officer placing a student with a disability in an IAES where school personnel maintain that it is dangerous for the student to be in his or her current educational placement, or during the pendency of due process hearings where school personnel maintain that it is dangerous for the student to be in his or her current educational placement during such proceedings.
 - b. The parent requests such a hearing from a determination that the student's behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability, or relating to any decision regarding placement, including but not limited to any decision to place the student in an IAES.
 - (1) During the pendency of an expedited due process hearing or appeal regarding the placement of a student in an IAES for behavior involving weapons, illegal drugs or controlled substances, or on grounds of dangerousness, or regarding a determination that the behavior is not a manifestation of the student's disability for a student who has been placed in an IAES, the student shall remain in the IAES pending the decision of the impartial hearing officer or until expiration of the IAES placement, whichever occurs first, unless the parents and the district agree otherwise.
 - (2) If school personnel propose to change the student's placement after expiration of an IAES placement, during the pendency of any proceeding to challenge the proposed change in placement, the student shall remain in the placement prior to removal to the IAES, except where the student is again placed in an IAES.
2. An expedited due process hearing shall be completed within 15 business days of receipt of the request for a hearing. Although the impartial hearing officer may grant specific extensions of such time period, he or she must mail a written decision to the district and the parents within five business days after the last hearing date, and in no event later than 45 calendar days after receipt of the request for a hearing, without exceptions or extensions.

E. Referral to law enforcement and judicial authorities

In accordance with the provisions of IDEA and its implementing regulations:

1. The district may report a crime committed by a child with a disability to appropriate authorities, and such action will not constitute a change of the student's placement.
2. The Superintendent shall ensure that copies of the special education and disciplinary records of a student with disabilities are transmitted for consideration to the appropriate authorities to whom a crime is reported.

5300.55 CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Corporal punishment is any act of physical force upon a student for the purpose of punishing that student. Corporal punishment of any student by any district employee is strictly forbidden.

However, in situations where alternative procedures and methods that do not involve the use of physical force cannot reasonably be used, reasonable physical force may be used to:

1. Protect oneself, another student, teacher or any person from physical injury.
2. Protect the property of the school or others.
3. Restrain or remove a student whose behavior interferes with the orderly exercise and performance of school district functions, powers and duties, if that student has refused to refrain from further disruptive acts.

The district will file all complaints about the use of corporal punishment with the Commissioner of Education in accordance with Commissioner's regulations.

5300.60 STUDENT SEARCHES AND INTERROGATIONS

The Board of Education is committed to ensuring an atmosphere on school property and at school functions that is safe and orderly. To achieve this kind of environment, any school official authorized to impose a disciplinary penalty on a student may question a student about an alleged violation of law or the district code of conduct. Students are not entitled to any sort of "Miranda"-type warning before being questioned by school officials, nor are school officials required to contact a student's parent before questioning the student. However, school officials will tell all students why they are being questioned.

In addition, the Board authorizes the Superintendent of Schools, Building Principals, the school nurse and district security officials to conduct searches of students and their belongings if the authorized school official has reasonable suspicion to believe that the search will result in evidence that the student violated the law or the district code of conduct.

An authorized school official may conduct a search of a student's belongings that is minimally intrusive, such as touching the outside of a book bag, without reasonable suspicion, so long as the school official has a legitimate reason for the very limited search.

An authorized school official may search a student or the student's belongings based upon information received from a reliable informant. Individuals, other than the district employees, will be considered reliable informants if they have previously supplied information that was accurate and verified, or they make an admission against their own interest, or they provide the same information that is received independently from other sources, or they appear to be credible and the information they are communicating relates to an immediate threat to safety. District employees will be considered reliable informants unless they are known to have previously supplied information that they knew was not accurate.

Before searching a student or the student's belongings, the authorized school official should attempt to get the student to admit that he or she possesses physical evidence that they violated the law or the district code, or get the student to voluntarily consent to the search. Searches will be limited to the extent necessary to locate the evidence sought.

Whenever practicable, searches will be conducted in the privacy of administrative offices and students will be present when their possessions are being searched.

A. Student Lockers, Desks and other School Storage Places

The rules in this code of conduct regarding searches of students and their belongings do not apply to student lockers, desks and other school storage places. Students have no reasonable expectation of privacy with respect to these places and school officials retain complete control over them. This means that student lockers, desks and other school storage places may be subject to search at any time by school officials, without prior notice to students and without their consent.

B. Strip searches

Because of the intrusive nature of this action, strip searches are not permissible. If school officials believe there is an emergency situation that could threaten the safety of other students, the student should be isolated and secured. Then police and parents should be contacted immediately.

C. Documentation of Searches

The Principal or the Principal's designee shall be responsible for the custody, control and disposition of any illegal or dangerous item taken from a student. The Principal or his or her designee shall clearly label each item taken from the student and retain control of the item(s), until the item is turned over to the police. The Principal or his or her designee shall be responsible for personally delivering dangerous or illegal items to police authorities.

D. Police Involvement in Searches and Interrogations of Students

District officials are committed to cooperating with police officials and other law enforcement authorities to maintain a safe school environment. Police officials, however, have limited authority to interview or search students in schools or at school functions, or to use school facilities in connection with police work. Police officials may enter school property or a school function to question or search a student or to conduct a formal investigation involving students only if they have:

1. A search or an arrest warrant; or
2. Probable cause to believe a crime has been committed on school property or at a school function; or
3. Been invited by school officials.

Before police officials are permitted to question or search any student, the Principal or his or her designee shall first try to notify the student's parent to give the parent the opportunity to be present during the police questioning or search. If the student's parent cannot be contacted prior to the police questioning or search, the questioning or search shall not be conducted. The Principal or designee will also be present during any police questioning or search of a student on school property or at a school function.

Students who are questioned by police officials on school property or at a school function will be afforded the same rights they have outside the school. This means:

1. They must be informed of their legal rights.
2. They may remain silent if they so desire.
3. They may request the presence of an attorney.

E. Child Protective Services Investigations

Consistent with the district's commitment to keep students safe from harm and the obligation of school officials to report to child protective services when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a student has been abused or maltreated, the district will cooperate with local child protective services workers who wish to conduct interviews of students on school property relating to allegations of suspected child abuse, and/or neglect, or custody investigations.

All requests by child protective services to interview a student on school property shall be made directly to Principal or his or her designee. The Principal or designee shall set the time and place of the interview. The Principal or designee shall decide if it is necessary and appropriate for a school official to be present during the interview, depending on the age of the student being interviewed and the nature of the allegations. If the nature of the allegations is such that it may be necessary for the student to remove any of his or her clothing in order for the child protective services worker to verify the allegations, the school nurse or other district medical personnel must be present during that portion of the interview. No student may be required to remove his or her clothing in front of a child protective services worker or school district official of the opposite sex.

A child protective services worker may not remove a student from school property without a court order, unless the worker reasonably believes that the student would be subject to danger of abuse if he or she were not removed from school before a court order can reasonably be obtained. If the worker believes the student would be subject to danger of abuse, the worker may remove the student without a court order and without the parent's consent.

5300.65 VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

The Board encourages parents and other district citizens to visit the district's schools. Since schools are a place of work and learning, however, certain limits must be set for such visits. The Principal or his or her designee is responsible for all persons in the building and on the grounds. For these reasons, the following rules apply to visitors to the schools:

1. Anyone who is not a regular staff member or student of the school will be considered a visitor.
2. All visitors to the school must report to the office of the Principal upon arrival at the school. There they will be required to sign the visitor's register and will be issued a visitor's identification badge, which must be worn at all times while in the school or on school grounds. The visitor must return the identification badge to the Principal's office before leaving the building.
3. Visitors attending school functions that are open to the public, such as parent-teacher organization meetings or public gatherings, are not required to register.
4. Parents or citizens who wish to observe a classroom while school is in session are required to arrange such visits in advance with the classroom teacher(s), so that class disruption is kept to a minimum.
5. Teachers are expected not to take class time to discuss individual matters with visitors.
6. Any unauthorized person on school property will be reported to the Principal or his or her designee. Unauthorized persons will be asked to leave. The police may be called if the situation warrants.
7. All visitors are expected to abide by the rules for public conduct on school property contained in this code of conduct.

5300.70 PUBLIC CONDUCT ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

The district is committed to providing an orderly, respectful environment that is conducive to learning. To create and maintain this kind of an environment, it is necessary to regulate public conduct on school property and at school functions. For purposes of this section of the code, public shall mean all persons when on school property or attending a school function including students, teachers and district personnel.

The restrictions on public conduct on school property and at school functions contained in this code are not intended to limit freedom of speech or peaceful assembly. The district recognizes that free inquiry and free expression are indispensable to the objectives of the district. The purpose of this code is to maintain public order and prevent abuse of the rights of others.

All persons on school property or attending a school function shall conduct themselves in a respectful and orderly manner. In addition, all persons on school property or attending a school function are expected to be properly attired for the purpose they are on school property.

A. Prohibited Conduct

No person, either alone or with others, shall:

1. Intentionally injure any person or threaten to do so.
2. Intentionally damage or destroy school district property or the personal property of a teacher, administrator, other district employee or any person lawfully on school property, including graffiti or arson.
3. Disrupt the orderly conduct of classes, school programs or other school activities.
4. Distribute or wear materials on school grounds or at school functions that are obscene, advocate illegal action, appear libelous, obstruct the rights of others, or are disruptive to the school program.
5. Intimidate, harass or discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability.
6. Enter any portion of the school premises without authorization or remain in any building or facility after it is normally closed.
7. Obstruct the free movement of any person in any place to which this code applies.
8. Violate the traffic laws, parking regulations or other restrictions on vehicles.
Possess, consume, sell, distribute or exchange alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, or be under the influence of either on school property or at a school function.
9. Possess or use weapons in or on school property or at a school function, except in the case of law enforcement officers or except as specifically authorized by the school district.
10. Loiter on or about school property.
11. Gamble on school property or at school functions.
12. Refuse to comply with any reasonable order of identifiable school district officials performing their duties.
13. Willfully incite others to commit any of the acts prohibited by this code.
14. Violate any federal or state statute, local ordinance or Board policy while on school property or while at a school function.
15. Engage in the use of tobacco products on district properties.
16. Intimidate, harass or bully any student or discriminate against any student on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, weight, creed, national origin, ethnic group, religion, age, religious practice, gender (identity or expression), sex, sexual orientation or disability.

B. Penalties

Persons who violate this code shall be subject to the following penalties:

1. Visitors. Their authorization, if any, to remain on school grounds or at the school function shall be withdrawn and they shall be directed to leave the premises. If they refuse to leave, they shall be subject to ejection.

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2. Students. They shall be subject to disciplinary action as the facts may warrant, in accordance with the due process requirements.
3. Tenured faculty members. They shall be subject to disciplinary action as the facts may warrant in accordance with Education Law §3020-a or any other legal rights that they may have.
4. Staff members in the classified service of the civil service entitled to the protection of Civil Service Law §75. They shall be subject to immediate ejection and to disciplinary action as the facts may warrant in accordance with Civil Service Law §75 or any other legal rights that they may have.
5. Staff members other than those described in subdivisions 3 and 4. They shall be subject to warning, reprimand, suspension or dismissal as the facts may warrant in accordance with any legal rights they may have.

C. Enforcement

The Principal or his/her designee shall be responsible for enforcing the conduct required by this code.

When the Principal or his or her designee sees an individual engaged in prohibited conduct, which in his or her judgment does not pose any immediate threat of injury to persons or property, the Principal or designee shall tell the individual that the conduct is prohibited and attempt to persuade the individual to stop. The Principal or designee shall also warn the individual of the consequences for failing to stop. If the person refuses to stop engaging in the prohibited conduct, or if the person's conduct poses an immediate threat of injury to persons or property, the Principal or designee shall have the individual removed immediately from school property or the school function. If necessary, local law enforcement authorities will be contacted to assist in removing the person.

The district shall initiate disciplinary action against any student or staff member, as appropriate, with the "Penalties" section above. In addition, the district reserves its right to pursue a civil or criminal legal action against any person violating the code.

5300.75 DISSEMINATION AND REVIEW

A. Dissemination of Code of Conduct

The Board will work to ensure that the community is aware of this code of conduct by:

1. Providing copies of a summary of the code of conduct in an age-appropriate version, written in plain language, to all students at a general assembly held at the beginning of each school year.
2. Making copies of the code available to all parents at the beginning of the school year.
3. Mailing a summary of the code of conduct written in plain language to all parents of district students before the beginning of the school year and making this summary available later upon request.
4. Providing all current teachers and other staff members with a copy of the code and a copy of any amendments to the code as soon as practicable after adoption.
5. Providing all new employees with a copy of the current code of conduct when they are first hired.
6. Making copies of the code available for review by students, parents and other community members.
7. Posting the complete code on the District's website.

The Board will sponsor an in-service education program for all district staff members to ensure the effective implementation of the code of conduct. The purpose of this in-service education is to promote a safe and supportive school climate while discouraging, among other things, discrimination, bullying and/or harassment against students by students and/or District staff and to guide District staff on the inclusion of safe and supportive school climate concepts in the curriculum and classroom management. The Superintendent may solicit the recommendations of the district staff, particularly teachers and administrators, regarding in-service programs pertaining to the management and discipline of students.

B. Review of Code of Conduct

The Board will review this code of conduct every year and update it as necessary. In conducting the review, the Board will consider how effective the code's provisions have been and whether the code has been applied fairly and consistently.

The Board may appoint an advisory committee to assist in reviewing the code and the district's response to code of conduct violations. The committee will be made up of representatives of student, teacher, administrator, and parent organizations, school safety personnel and other school personnel.

Before adopting any revisions to the code, the Board will hold at least one public hearing at which school personnel, parents, students and any other interested party may participate.

The code of conduct and any amendments to it will be filed with the Commissioner of Education no later than 30 days after adoption.

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