

# PLAIN LANGUAGE

## NORWICH CITY SCHOOLS Administrative Guidelines B402.1

### CODE OF CONDUCT

#### I. INTRODUCTION

The Norwich City School District 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.

The District recognizes the need to clearly define these expectations for acceptable conduct on school property, to identify the possible consequences of unacceptable conduct, and to ensure that discipline when necessary is administered promptly and fairly. Unless otherwise indicated, this code applies to all students, school personnel, parents and other visitors when on school property or attending a school function. For a complete copy of the Code of Conduct see Board Policy A402.1.

#### II. STUDENT DRESS CODE

All students are expected to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to dress appropriately for school and school functions. 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, including hair style/color, jewelry, make-up and nails, 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 cannot be worn on school property or at school functions.
3. Not include items that are vulgar, obscene, and libelous or denigrate others on account of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender and sex.
4. Ensure that underwear, including muscle shirts, is completely covered with outer clothing.
5. Include footwear at all times. Footwear that is a safety hazard will not be allowed.
6. Not include the wearing of hats, scarves, and bandanas in the classroom except for a medical or religious purpose.
7. Not promote and/or endorse the use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs and/or encourage other illegal or violent activities.

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall send a letter 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. 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.

### **III. 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. Students must learn to assume and accept responsibility for their own behavior, as well as 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 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.
8. Possession/use of cell phones, beepers, etc.

#### **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.
4. Failing to report to AI (Alternative Instruction).

**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 loaded or unloaded 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 loaded or unloaded weapon.
5. Threatening to use any loaded or unloaded weapon.
6. Intentionally damaging or destroying the personal property of a student, teacher, administrator, other district employee or any person lawfully on school property.
7. Intentionally damaging or destroying school district property.
8. Harassment, bullying, or intimidating students or school personnel.

**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, which includes the use of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability as a basis for treating another in a negative manner.
5. Harassment or illegal discrimination, which includes the use of race, color, weight, creed, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, sex, gender, sexual orientation or disability as a basis for treating another in a negative manner which includes a sufficiently severe action or persistent or pervasive pattern or actions or statements.
6. Bullying
7. Cyber bullying
8. Sexting
9. Intimidation, which includes engaging in actions or statements that put an individual in fear of bodily harm.
10. 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.
11. Selling, using or possessing obscene material.
12. Using vulgar or abusive language, cursing or swearing.
13. Possessing a cigarette, cigar, pipe or using chewing or smokeless tobacco.

14. Possessing, consuming, selling, distributing or exchanging alcoholic beverages, illegal substances, or being under the influence of either or synthetic cannabinoid products including but not limited to incense herbal mixture potpourri. “Illegal substances” include, but are not limited to inhalants, marijuana, cocaine, LSD, PCP, amphetamines, heroin, steroid look-alike drugs, and any substances commonly referred to as “designer drugs.”
15. Possessing, using or sharing prescription and over-the-counter drugs.
16. Gambling.
17. Indecent exposure, that is, exposure to sight of the private parts of the body in a lewd or indecent manner.
18. 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.

#### **G. Engage in Any Form of Academic Misconduct**

Examples of academic misconduct include:

1. Plagiarism
2. Cheating
3. Copying
4. Altering records
5. Assisting another student in any of the above actions

#### Definitions of Bullying

“Bullying” is a form of harassment that consists of inappropriate and often persistent behavior including threats or intimidation of others, treating others cruelly, terrorizing, coercing, or habitual put-downs and badgering of others. Bullying occurs when someone purposely says or does mean or hurtful things to another person who has a hard time defending oneself or is in an otherwise vulnerable position.

#### Reporting Procedures

Students are to report any incidents of discrimination, harassment, bullying, cyber bullying, hazing or sexting by completing a “Harassment/Bullying Prevention Form.” These forms are located in the school Guidance Office and Main Office. Forms can also be accessed and completed online on the District’s homepage. Forms can be turned into the Guidance Office or Main Office. Online forms can be emailed directly to the appropriate building coordinator.

#### Dignity Act Coordinator

The Board of Education has designated the following individuals as the Dignity Act Coordinator who has been thoroughly trained to handle human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender and sex. This person will serve as the resource and be responsible for the oversight of investigatory procedures of allegations of bullying. The Dignity Act Coordinator can be contacted at:

**Gibson Elementary:**

Elaina Van der Sommen- School Counselor  
89 Midland Drive  
334-1600 ext 4071 email: [evandersommen@norwichcsd.org](mailto:evandersommen@norwichcsd.org)

Susan LaFever- School Counselor  
89 Midland Drive  
334-1600 ext 4082 email: [slafever@norwichcsd.org](mailto:slafever@norwichcsd.org)

**Perry Browne:**

Elizabeth Pizzuto - School Counselor  
89 Midland Drive  
334-1600 ext 3010 email: [epizzuto@norwichcsd.org](mailto:epizzuto@norwichcsd.org)

**Middle School:**

Joe Downey - Dean of Students  
89 Midland Drive  
334-1600 ext 2001 email: [jdowney@norwichcsd.org](mailto:jdowney@norwichcsd.org)

**High School:**

Amanda Clark - School Counselor  
89 Midland Drive  
334-1600 ext 1639 email: [aclark@norwichcsd.org](mailto:aclark@norwichcsd.org)

Kelly Collins Colosi - Social Worker  
89 Midland Drive  
334-1600 ext 1237 email: [kcollins@norwichcsd.org](mailto:kcollins@norwichcsd.org)

**IV. PENALTIES**

In assessing disciplinary penalties, school personnel 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 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. Discipline penalties will be assessed in compliance with IDEA and New York State Law where the student is a student with a disability. Students found to have violated the District's Code of Conduct may be subject to one or more of the following penalties:

1. Oral warning
2. Written warning
3. Written notification to parent
4. Counseling
5. Probation
6. Reprimand
7. Detention

8. Alternative Instruction
9. Suspension from transportation
10. Suspension from athletic participation
11. Suspension from social or extracurricular activities
12. Suspension of other privileges
13. Exclusion from a particular class
14. Short-term suspension from school
15. Long-term suspension from school
16. Permanent suspension from school

### Remedial Consequences

Remedial responses, which may be utilized for, but not limited, to instances of discrimination and harassment of students by students and/or employees may include:

1. Peer support groups, corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experiences
2. Supportive intervention
3. Behavioral assessment or evaluation
4. Behavioral management plans, with benchmarks that are closely monitored
5. Student counseling and parent conferences

Note: Students who are either suspended or assigned to Alternative Instruction are to be excluded from all school sponsored extracurricular and social activities during their disciplinary action. These activities include, but are not limited to, participation in athletic practices and contests, and attendance at any school sponsored events.

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.

## **V. MINIMUM PERIODS OF SUSPENSION**

1. Students who bring a weapon to school will be subject to suspension from school for at least one calendar year unless otherwise determined by the superintendent.
2. Students who commit violent acts other than bringing a weapon to school shall be subject to suspension from school for at least five days unless otherwise determined by the superintendent.
3. Students who are repeatedly substantially disruptive of the educational process or repeatedly substantially interfere with the teacher's authority over the classroom will be suspended from school for at least five days. For purposes of the Code of Conduct "repeatedly substantially disruptive" means engaging in conduct that results in the student being removed from the classroom pursuant to Education Law 3214(3)(a) and this code on multiple occasions.

## **VI. REFERRALS**

1. Guidance shall handle all referrals of students to counseling.
2. PINS Petitions may be filed on any student under the age of 18 who demonstrates he or she requires supervision by:
  - a. Being habitually truant and not attending school as required.
  - 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 in violation of the Penal Law.
3. 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 brought a weapon to school.
  - b. Any student 14 or 15 years of age who qualifies for juvenile offender status.

## **VII. VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL**

The building principal or designee is responsible for all persons in the building and on the grounds for these reasons:

1. Anyone not a regular staff member or student will be considered a visitor.
2. All visitors must sign the visitor's book at the Main Office. Anyone visiting a student must first secure permission from the building principal. All visitors must be issued and must wear a visitor's identification badge. Visitors must sign out and return the badge upon leaving the premises.
3. Visitors must comply with all of the school rules and regulations contained in this code of conduct while on school grounds.

## **VIII. PUBLIC CONDUCT ON SCHOOL PROPERTY**

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. No person 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;
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 to 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;
9. Possess or use weapons in or on school property or at a school function;

10. 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;
11. Loiter on or about school property;
12. Gamble on school property or at school functions;
13. Use profane or lewd language;
14. Refuse to comply with any reasonable order of identifiable school district officials performing their duties;
15. Willfully incite others to commit any of the acts prohibited by this code;
16. Violate any federal or state statute, local ordinance or board policy while on school property or while at a school function;
17. Bring any dog onto the property except as part of the educational process and with the approval of an administrator.
18. Intimidate, harass or discriminate against any person on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.

## **IX. TRANSPORTATION RULES AND GUIDELINES**

Students should be on time at the designated school bus stops and should wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before attempting to enter. Obey the following rules:

1. Be courteous, use no profanity.
2. Keep the bus clean.
3. Absolutely no tobacco use.
4. Stay in your seat.
5. Keep your head, hands, and feet inside the bus.
6. Never throw anything out of the windows or in the bus.
7. No glass bottles, jam boxes, or live pets are allowed.
8. No fighting is permitted.
9. Obey the bus driver's directions.
10. The bus driver assigns seats.
11. Avoid making loud noises.
12. Be absolutely quiet when approaching a railroad crossing.
13. Do not leave books, lunches, or other articles in the aisles or on the bus.
14. The same standard of conduct that applies in classroom is expected on the bus.
15. Riding the bus is a privilege, not a right. Failure to abide by the rules may result in the loss of your bus riding privilege.

Transportation is provided to students who live within the school district. All students are expected to behave on the buses in a manner that is respectful to the rights of others. All students are governed by the expectations of the Code of Conduct while on buses. Behavior that is disruptive on school buses threatens the life and safety of all students and will not be tolerated. In an effort to assure safe transportation:

- All drivers will make every attempt to deal with situations that arise among students while they are riding on the bus.
- Drivers will give students only one warning about infractions.
- If a student continues to violate rules, despite warnings, a Bus Discipline Referral will be filed with the Principal.

- A Bus Discipline Referral will be filed with the Building Principal immediately following a violation that seriously endangers other passengers.
- Drivers will verbally notify students that their behavior is being reported.

The Building Principal will respond to discipline referrals through the range of penalties listed in the Code of Conduct. Consultation with the driver prior to the disciplinary response will be initiated if circumstances require. Students receiving more than three referrals will face a transportation review. This review will include the student, parent, Building Principal, and the Director of Transportation. Suspension of bus privileges will occur if students persist in unsafe behavior. Students suspended from bus transportation are required to be in school. Transportation of students while suspended from the bus is the responsibility of the parents/guardians.

#### Authorized Transportation

Students may only leave school grounds with authorized transportation. This involves students' own bus and bus stop, or riding with individuals who have been identified as accepted by parents/guardians on the Student Information Form.

#### Video Cameras on School Buses

The Board of Education recognizes its responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of staff and students on school transportation vehicles. Video cameras will be used to monitor student behavior on a school vehicle transporting students to and from school or co-curricular activities.

### **X. SEXUAL HARASSMENT/DISCRIMINATION OF STUDENTS**

It is the policy of the Norwich High School that all members of its school community have a right to work, learn, or visit in a harassment-free environment. In the Norwich City School District, sexual harassment in any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. The District will take all necessary steps to ensure that the District shall be free from sexual harassment.

#### **A. District Responsibility**

The District shall take steps to prevent sexual harassment from occurring, such as affirmatively raising the subject, expressing strong disapproval, developing appropriate sanctions, informing students and employees of their rights to raise and how to raise issues of sexual harassment under Title VI and Title IX, and developing methods to educate and sensitize the school community.

#### **B. Definitions**

The following unwelcome behaviors can constitute sexual harassment:

- Unwelcome verbal conduct
- Unwelcome physical conduct
- Demands of a sexual nature
- Sexual advances or propositions
- Verbal threats of a sexual nature
- Jokes of a sexual nature
- Sexual innuendoes or suggestive comments or telephone calls
- Sexually degrading words to describe an individual or an individual's body
- Whistling or obscene gestures of a sexual nature

**C. Complaint Procedure**

If you believe you have been sexually harassed by a student or staff member, the first step is to make a report to the Building Principal. The Building Principal may refer the report to the School Sexual Harassment Officer.

**D. Reprisals**

The District will follow-up with the complainant to ensure that there is no harassment or retaliation following the investigation. Any individual who retaliates against any person who reports alleged sexual harassment or who retaliates against a person who testifies, assists or participates in an investigation, proceeding or hearing relating to a sexual harassment complaint may become the subject of disciplinary action. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment.

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