

Prince William County Public Schools

CODE OF BEHAVIOR

2022-23



PWCS VISION 2025
LAUNCHING THRIVING FUTURES

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The following individuals will handle inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies, including Section 504 and Title IX:*

*Mailing Address
P.O. Box 389, Manassas, VA 20108*

*Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Civil Rights, Section 504
Compliance (Employees), Equal Employment Opportunity,
Americans with Disabilities Act, Grievance Procedures:
Equity and Employee Relations Office • 703-791-8764*

*Section 504 Compliance (Students):
Director of Special Education • 703-791-7287*

*Title IX Compliance:
Title IX Coordinator and Equity and Student Relations Department
571-374-6839*

*Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):
FERPA Officer • 703-791-7445*

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Introduction

The Virginia Constitution confers upon a local school board the authority to supervise the operation of the public schools under the school board's control. This authority includes the power to supervise and discipline students.

The Prince William County School Board seeks to protect the rights of all its students to an education commensurate with their abilities, interests, values, and goals by providing safeguards for the health, safety, and rights of the individual student and school employee, and for the protection of school property.

However, the task of training and educating youth must be shared by all members of the school community—students, professional teaching staff, administrators, specialized instructional support personnel, and parent(s)—who all bear responsibility to equitably support the rules of the school and the integrity of the educational process.

It is the duty of the parent to prepare the child to assume responsibility in the school environment, this includes responsibility for learning and exhibiting conduct that does not infringe upon the safety and rights of another. (See page 7 for additional information, including legal responsibilities of parents.) The school has the right to expect reasonable and self-disciplined behavior from each student. Since self-discipline cannot be imposed from without, the students must be permitted a degree of freedom of choice and action to develop their individual talents and abilities.

The Virginia Code § 22.1-78, states: “A school board may adopt bylaws and regulations including but not limited to the proper discipline of students, including their conduct going to and returning from school.” The School Board's rules governing student conduct are summarized in the Code of Behavior (COB) and are also addressed in the Prince William County Public Schools' policies and regulations.

The provisions of this COB apply whenever students are involved, such as:

- during regular school attendance and whenever present on school property or virtually;
- at school activities on property owned by the School Board, to include School Age Child Care (SACC) and Next Generation Programs;
- when going to and from school and bus stops;
- on school buses and at bus stops;
- in cases involving off-site, school-sponsored activities such as field trips, sporting events, and club activities; and
- when conduct by a student occurring off school grounds or school property has a material effect on the operation or general welfare of the School Division, impacts the integrity of the educational process, threatens the safety and welfare of students, staff, or school property, occurs when the student is under the school's authority in loco parentis or otherwise invades the rights of students or staff.

The Superintendent may, for good cause, approve a deviation from the procedures set forth in the COB in its present form, so long as the basic rights of students, parent(s), the community at large, and/or school personnel are not violated. Good cause means protecting the health, safety, welfare, and educational opportunities of the students in the school system.

Please Note

“Parent(s),” as used throughout, means biological parent(s), adoptive parent(s), or legal guardian(s).

For purposes of this publication, references to “School Board” should be understood to indicate the Prince William County School Board.

Reporting Allegations of Student Misconduct

Students, faculty, staff, and parents share the responsibility for an orderly and safe school environment.

Information about drugs, weapons, or other factors which may be harmful to the school environment should be reported through the “Say Something” Anonymous Reporting System (SS-ARS). SS-ARS is designed specifically for students in grades 6-12 and staff to report any serious or potentially violent concerns of unsafe behavior or threats of harm to self or others. Say Something is a youth violence prevention program from the national nonprofit organization Sandy Hook Promise and is provided and sustained at no cost to PWCS.

“Tipsters” can send reports on anything from school threats they’ve seen or overheard to personal crises, including sexual harassment, self-harm, and depression. The system enables school administrators and law enforcement to create effective interventions and intervene upon at-risk individuals to help prevent violence, suicide, bullying, self-harm, and other forms of threatening behavior.

All tips submitted receive an immediate response by one of the highly-skilled crisis counselors at the Sandy Hook Promise National Crisis Center; this person then determines the necessary support steps. When credible tips are received that are life-threatening and/or involve an imminent threat, the crisis center will immediately contact local 911 dispatch and involve law enforcement, then notify central office staff and school-based representatives, even after hours.

See a warning sign or threat, use the following suggestions for reporting such information:



- use this QR code
- text *TIP* to 79775
- submit an anonymous tip by calling 1-844-5-SAYNOW or visiting www.SaySomething.net
- download the free app from the App Store or Google Play Store, where tips can be submitted instantly; once downloaded, it will ask for a 4-digit code you select and remember
- call 911 in cases of immediate emergency
- harassment or other forms of discrimination should be reported to a school administrator or to the Equity and Student Relations Department at TitleIXEquity@pwcs.edu or 571-374-6839
- students who discover something in their possession which is not permitted at school, should report to an administrator or other staff member immediately; any follow-up action shall take into consideration that the student voluntarily brought this to the attention of staff

Roles and Responsibilities

Prince William County School Board

The Code of Behavior (COB) has been established for Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS). The School Board, acting through the Superintendent, holds all school employees responsible for supervising student behavior while students are legally under the supervision of the schools. The School Board holds all students responsible for appropriate conduct as defined in the policies and regulations of the School Board and as summarized in the COB. Policies and regulations governing student behavior and student discipline can be found in the PWCS policies and regulations, which are available online at www.pwcs.edu.

All PWCS employees are held to the highest ethical standards and are accountable for their actions. Therefore, all staff must comply with the policies and regulations established by the School Board.

The School Board holds all parents responsible for reading the COB and any policies or regulations referenced in the COB for promoting proper student conduct.

Student Management and Alternative Programs Department (SMAPD)

As delineated in Policy 747, “Student Management and Alternative Programs Department (SMAPD),” the School Board has designated SMAPD to enforce and coordinate the School Division’s efforts to provide a safe school environment conducive to teaching and learning. The purposes of SMAPD are as follows:

- to resolve serious student disciplinary offenses;
- to provide a variety of educational opportunities that address the varied needs of students in grades K-12 and adult learners;
- to promote a safe educational environment conducive to teaching and learning and free from violence, conflict, and unnecessary disruptions;
- to decrease the number of long-term suspensions and expulsions through a process that provides increased nontraditional and alternative education opportunities;
- to oversee and conduct the due process procedures applicable to the long-term suspension, expulsion, exclusion, and readmission of students, and to coordinate any appeals to the School Board; and
- to determine the appropriate educational services, programs, and placements for regular education students who are subject to SMAPD’s disciplinary process.

Attention

Please be aware that security cameras are in all buildings and will be used to ensure the safety and security of all PWCS students, staff, and property.

Educational Team

While discipline is ultimately the responsibility of the individual, the implementation of an effective discipline program requires a cooperative team effort. An equitable and preventive approach to discipline shall be taken in an effort to clarify standards of conduct, effectively assess a student’s individual needs, and identify any significant factors that may be contributing to a student’s misconduct. The school principal is the instructional leader responsible for the development of school-based behavior expectations that are consistent with the policies and regulations of the School Board and the Code of Behavior (COB). Administrators, teachers, and support personnel all work together to ensure the rights and responsibilities of each student in the School Division.

The educational team is responsible for:

- providing a safe and positive school environment;
- providing a favorable psychological environment for learning;
- encouraging self-discipline;
- providing an atmosphere of mutual respect;
- treating each student as an individual in accordance with one’s needs;
- encouraging, monitoring, and evaluating the progress of students;
- initiating and maintaining open lines of communication with parents;
- discussing the COB with students at the beginning of each school year and providing periodic review during the school year;
- formulating and implementing school rules and regulations in compliance with the policies and regulations of

- the School Board and the COB throughout the school setting;
- providing both instruction and access to the COB to all new students upon registration throughout the school year;
- developing a plan of action, whenever possible, based on the needs of the student and the school environment as a whole; and
- maintaining the educational records of individual students to include a record of disciplinary actions involving the student.

Such records may contain information on police arrest or court action if the student is involved in unlawful behavior. Whenever charges are placed with juvenile court authorities, it may be considered an “arrest” even if the student is not physically taken into custody by police.

School administrators are responsible for appropriate follow-up action whenever students report misconduct that violates the COB. Teachers, counselors, and other educational support staff are responsible for helping students obtain the assistance they may need from administrators. Staff response to each student complaint should be documented.

Families as Partners

Recognizing the partnership between schools and families in making schools safe, effective learning environments, and in promoting the social-emotional development of children is important. Prince William County Public Schools emphasizes the significance of positive communication between families and educators and encourages avenues for families to communicate their concerns, provide suggestions, and access information regarding their children to create a positive partnership between families and schools, thus strengthening the school community.

Under Virginia law, parents have a duty to:

- assist the school in enforcing the standards of student conduct and compulsory school attendance in order that education may be conducted in an atmosphere free of disruption and threat to persons or property, and supportive of individual rights. [Virginia Code § 22.1-279.3 (A)];
- review and acknowledge the Code of Behavior (COB), promote proper student conduct, assist the school with the discipline of the student, and meet with school officials, if requested, to discuss matters related to discipline and school;
- sign a statement showing that they know their responsibilities. Such a statement is located in the New School Year Packet in ParentVUE;
- complete an annual review of the COB and other necessary legal acknowledgments immediately prior to the start of school or during the first weeks of the school year;
- ensure that the student is appropriately dressed for school as determined by the dress code, which is developed cooperatively at local schools by students, parent(s), and school staff;
- provide such books, materials, instruments, uniforms, and equipment as are required for effective participation in the school program;
- know promotion and graduation requirements as published each year for middle and high school students in the “Course Catalog;”
- provide current emergency information, including a telephone number, to the school to ensure that the school will have immediate contact with the parent in case of an emergency;
- provide a certified copy of the student’s birth certificate, and/or immigration documentation, physical examination, record of the completed series of immunizations, upon initial entry to school;
- understand that drugs and weapons, as described in the COB, will not be tolerated at school activities on property owned by the School Board, when going to and from school and bus stops, on school buses, at bus stops, and in cases involving off-site, school-sponsored activities such as field trips, sporting events, and club activities; and that violators are subject to corrective action, up to and including expulsion; and
- reference the legal notices to students and parents on pages 28-29.

(Parents may express disagreement with a school’s or school division’s policies or decisions. Students/parents also maintain the right to appeal a suspension or expulsion under § 22.1-277.04-06 of the Virginia Code.)

Professional Teaching Staff

According to Virginia’s Standards of Accreditation 8VAC20-131-220, “The professional teaching staff shall be responsible for providing instruction that is educationally sound in an atmosphere of mutual respect and courtesy...” Teachers are responsible for establishing and maintaining a safe, supportive environment that is developmentally and culturally appropriate and that promotes student academic, behavior, and social-emotional development. Developing positive relationships with students that are built on mutual trust and respect have been shown to demonstrate some of the highest positive effects on student achievement and behavior.

Developing relationships requires “specific skills of the teacher such as the skills of listening, empathy, caring, and having a positive regard for others.” The impact of teacher-student relationship variables includes gains in positive behavior, critical/creative thinking, math skills, verbal skills, and overall grades.

Because there is a correlation between student behaviors, positive school climate, academic achievement, and in an effort to keep students in the classroom with uninterrupted instruction, teacher responsibilities include:

- developing positive relationships;
- developing a safe and positive physical environment;
- teaching (and reteaching when necessary) behavioral expectations;
- reinforcing positive behavior;
- providing instructional feedback on behaviors;
- utilizing the school’s tiered framework of interventions and supports for students who are not meeting behavioral expectations;
- recognizing personal stress, reactions that may escalate negative student behavior, and personal bias; and
- using individual and classroom data to progress monitor student behavior and the teacher’s responses to behavior.

If a student is not meeting the behavioral expectations and the teacher has implemented classroom or school-based interventions as outlined in school procedures, the teacher may request that a student be removed from a class.

Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP)

The Virginia Board of Education’s Model Guidance for Positive and Preventive Code of Student Conduct Policy and Alternatives to Suspension (Revised June 2021) recognizes that SISP professionals have a direct role in promoting and supporting a positive school climate that focuses on prevention, intervention, and support to assist students in meeting the behavioral expectations of the Code of Behavior (COB).

School Counselors

School counseling programs support the Virginia Standards of Learning by providing guidance to students in their academic, career, personal, and social development. School counselors collaborate with parents, teachers, administrators, and others to promote learning and to help students establish and achieve their education, career, and personal goals using the following standards:

- Academic Development – Students will acquire the academic preparation essential to choose from a variety of educational, training, and employment options upon completion of secondary school.
- Career Development – Students will investigate the world of work in order to make informed career decisions.
- Social-Emotional – Students will acquire an understanding of, and respect for, self and others, and the skills needed to be responsible citizens.

School Social Workers

School social workers “have special expertise in understanding family and community systems and linking students and their families with the community services that are essential for promoting student success.

- They work to remedy barriers to learning created because of poverty, inadequate health care, and neighborhood violence. School social workers often focus on providing supports to vulnerable populations of students who have a high risk for truancy and dropping out of school, such as homeless and foster children, migrant populations, students transitioning between school and treatment programs or the juvenile justice system, or students experiencing domestic violence.
- They work closely with teachers, administrators, parents, and other educators to provide coordinated interventions and consultation designed to keep students in school and help their families access the supports needed to promote student success.¹

School Psychologists

School psychologists have specialized training that enables them to understand and work with students in relation to their academic progress, behavior, social-emotional development, and relationships.

¹ Cowan, K.C., Vaillancourt, K., Rossen, E., and Pollitt, K. (2013) A Framework for safe and successful schools [Brief]. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists, p. 9.

- “School psychologists specialize in analyzing complex student and school problems and selecting and implementing appropriate evidence-based interventions to improve outcomes at home and school.”²¹
- They may consult with teachers and parents to coordinate services and supports for students’ academic, social, and behavioral needs.
- Their training in conducting risk and threat assessments and in evaluation, data collection, and interpretation can facilitate identifying and implementing the supports that students may need to ensure their success.

School Nurses

The school nurse provides emergency care assessments and interventions, management of acute and chronic health conditions, referral, and support to access primary care, preventive services, communicable diseases control measures, counseling for health promotion, and identification and management of health-related barriers to student learning.

Non-Certified Staff

- All members of the school community should be engaged in and responsible for establishing a positive school climate.
- Every school employee is responsible for ensuring a safe, supportive, effective learning environment.

Law Enforcement Agencies/Personnel

The school resource officer (SRO) is defined in § 9.1-101 of the Virginia Code as “a certified law enforcement officer hired by the local law enforcement agency to provide law enforcement and security services to Virginia public elementary and secondary schools.” However, law enforcement officers are not school disciplinarians. Their role in Prince William County Public Schools is to promote positive and supportive school climates and to create and maintain safe and secure school environments by focusing on incidents that may involve a violation of criminal law, while school administrators focus on whether student conduct violates the provisions of the Code of Behavior.

Student Rights

The Constitution and the laws of the United States and the Commonwealth of Virginia give students many legal rights and liberties. School Board policies and regulations provide students many privileges as well, according to their ages and maturity levels. Students may exercise these rights and privileges as long as they do not interfere with the rights of others or the schools’ ability to provide a safe learning environment.

Prince William County Public Schools students have the right to:

- schools, offices, and classrooms that are caring, nurturing, and enhance positive relationships;
- curriculum and instruction that promote opportunities for rigorous educational experiences;
- attend schools that are welcoming, safe, and conducive to a positive learning environment for staff and students;
- equitable and valuable educational experiences with respect to their individual level of understanding and capabilities;
- express their opinions freely through speech, assembly, petition, and other lawful means, so as not to interfere with the instructional process;
- receive adequate and meaningful due process prior to being excluded from school for disciplinary purposes;
- advocate for due process when disputing a suspension or expulsion decision;
- essential documents translated or interpreted in a language of their understanding when requested; and
- courtesy, respect, and fairness from adults and other students to include their cultural beliefs and differences.

Student Code of Expectations

The student-developed Code of Expectations establishes behaviors, attitudes, and actions that promote responsibility and success in school.

² Cowan, K.C., Vaillancourt, K., Rossen, E., and Pollitt, K. (2013) A Framework for safe and successful schools [Brief]. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists, p. 9.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CODE OF EXPECTATIONS

Grades K - Two:

As a caring and responsible student in Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS), I pledge to:

- ask for help when I need it;
- find opportunities to help adults and friends;
- obey rules and stay out of bad situations;
- practice, be honest, and take care of property;
- do my best and complete my schoolwork and homework;
- be honest and always tell the truth;
- make good decisions when using technology and adhere to the PWCS Responsible Use and Internet Safety Policy;
- be a good friend and not bully others; and
- be proud of who I am and not be intimidated by others.

Grades Three - Five:

As a caring and responsible student in Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS), I pledge to:

- ask for help when I need it;
- communicate positively with adults;
- find opportunities to help adults and friends;
- become involved in school/community activities;
- obey rules and stay out of bad situations;
- make good decisions when using technology and adhere to the PWCS Responsible Use and Internet Safety Policy;
- encourage other students to be good role models;
- practice, be honest, and take care of property;
- become active after homework by participating in activities with friends and family;
- do my best and complete all of my schoolwork and homework;
- treat adults and other students with respect;
- be honest and always tell the truth;
- stand up for myself and others, and be a role model;
- be a good friend and not bully others;
- try to understand the feelings of others;
- be proud of who I am and not be intimidated by others; and
- be a good influence on younger children.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CODE OF EXPECTATIONS

As a caring and responsible student in Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS), I pledge to:

- be respectful and encouraging to others;
- set good examples for other students in the classroom;
- communicate openly with parents, teachers, and school staff;
- encourage other students to make positive decisions;
- be a role model and promote safe decision-making by other students;
- serve the community by conducting activities such as food drives, requesting donations when needed, etc.;
- follow the boundaries set by my family, school, and community;
- select friends and role models carefully;
- strive to do my best and not lower my expectations even if I sometimes fail;
- participate in school activities and athletic teams;
- find a distraction-free place to study;
- use my time wisely and not procrastinate when completing assignments;
- guide and encourage other students to do well in school;
- set a good example by ignoring negative influences around me;
- listen attentively in class and be a good role model for other students;
- take responsibility for my actions;
- exercise good judgement when using technology and adhere to the PWCS Responsible Use and Internet Safety Policy;
- control my behavior and refuse to do what I know is wrong;

- believe in the equality of all regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic background, or other personal characteristics;
- respect students who may have backgrounds different from mine;
- plan ahead to make the right decisions;
- avoid inappropriate situations;
- participate in many different activities and motivate others to do so;
- find adult role models who provide me with support when I need to talk with someone; and
- believe in myself.

HIGH SCHOOL CODE OF EXPECTATIONS

As a caring and responsible student in Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS), I pledge to:

- encourage my parents to be actively involved in my education and school activities;
- build open and healthy communication with the adults in my life;
- work to create a caring school environment;
- help my school and community to be viewed in a positive way by being a respected role model, making good decisions, and upholding responsibilities given to me;
- serve my school and community by volunteering to support activities which are beneficial and promote a safe school environment;
- conduct myself in ways which adults view as responsible so they will value my opinion due to my accountability and good reputation;
- cooperate with my teachers and other adults;
- cooperate with my family and neighborhood in order to establish clear rules for youth in my community;
- model positive and inspiring behavior that I see in adults;
- become involved in an extracurricular activity to provide additional structure in my schedule;
- develop interests in different activities and expand/broaden my involvement in the community;
- spread my time equally among different activities (school, home, and extracurricular activities);
- abide by the rules and regulations in the Code of Behavior (COB) to further the education of myself and my peers;
- exercise good judgement when using technology and adhere to the PWCS Responsible Use and Internet Safety Policy;
- actively engage in school functions and demonstrate that I care about the well-being of my community;
- improve my education by being committed to completing my assignments and academic responsibilities;
- promote a more positive attitude that could influence others by equipping me with proper characteristics such as integrity and honesty;
- honor my positive values not only in a school environment, but in my everyday decisions by stressing the importance of a caring personality and working for equality;
- appreciate the positive values that influence me to be who I am and incorporate those values within our schools and communities;
- treat all of my peers equally regardless of their differences and backgrounds;
- plan ahead and use my knowledge to make positive decisions against negative peer pressure;
- use my empathy, sympathy, and friendship skills to resolve my conflicts non-violently;
- know that I have a sense of purpose;
- know my goals in life and be optimistic about my future; and
- have a vision for my future and create a plan to achieve it.

Students, staff, and parents share the responsibility for an orderly and safe school environment. Information about drugs, weapons, or other factors which may be harmful to others or to the school environment should be reported. Any attempted or actual retaliation for the reporting of COB violations shall be addressed by corrective action, up to and including expulsion.

Students who have knowledge of drugs, weapons, violence, or other behaviors which may be harmful to others or to the school environment, may be subject to disciplinary action for failure to report such information to school authorities.

Students who discover something in their possession which is not permitted at school, should report to an administrator or other staff member immediately. School staff responsible for initiating follow-up action shall take into consideration that the student voluntarily brought this to the attention of staff. Students should contact an administrator, teacher, counselor, or other trusted adult immediately if they have information about, or believe that they have been, victims of misconduct which violates the COB.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

A basic element of effective prevention of misconduct is the setting of Division-wide school rules which are implemented in a consistent manner. Equitable and consistent implementation of rules and regulations shall occur across school sites and within all student groupings. Employees are subject to relevant Code of Behavior (COB) policies, rules, and regulations. When no specific penalty is cited, the principal has the authority to set the appropriate penalty for infractions, which may range from counseling to further disciplinary action (long-term suspension, placement in a nontraditional setting, or recommendation for expulsion) by the Student Management and Alternative Programs Department, depending on the severity of the infraction. The student's age and grade level, the circumstances surrounding the infraction, and other relevant factors will be considered by the principal when determining the appropriate corrective measure. In addition, students may be subject to criminal prosecution for certain offenses. The following is a summary of the established standards of conduct for Prince William County Public Schools:

Assault, Assault and Battery - The threat of a verbal or physical attack (assault) and the use of force upon a person (battery) is expressly forbidden.

Assault and/or Battery of a School Division Employee - The assault and battery of any School Division employee, to include substitutes, is strictly prohibited. Students accused of committing these infractions are subject to discipline, up to and including further disciplinary action.

Attendance - Under Virginia law, students are responsible for attending school every day that school is in session. Regulation 724-1, "Attendance and Excuses," contains the specific information related to student attendance as summarized here. Absences, tardies, and/or early dismissals must have documented approval from a parent and/or school personnel. Within five days of the absence from school, the parent shall provide documentation to appropriate school staff to excuse the absence. Classwork for excused absences may be made up according to Regulation 724-1. The student or parent is responsible for obtaining assignments. Students coming in late to school should follow the school's procedures for checking in.

Types of Excused Absences:

- isolation of a student during the pandemic according to guidelines set forth by the Virginia Department of Health;
- students experiencing mental and/or behavioral health issues, disorder, or disturbances in accordance with established school guidelines provided by the Virginia Department of Education;
- personal illness of the student;
- medical and dental examination and/or treatment of the student when such appointments cannot be scheduled outside school hours;
- student participation in school-sponsored activities taking place during school hours;
- with prior approval of the principal, seniors may be excused for college admission visitations or to apply for post-graduation jobs;
- death in the student's immediate family or household;
- required court appearance;
- observation of a religious holiday (students should not be deprived of any award or of eligibility or opportunity to compete for any award or of the right to take an alternative test or examination, due to such absence);
- emergency conditions in the student's home which require special help from the student in caring for the sick or injured; however, repeated use of this excuse or requests for absences for more than five consecutive days must be referred to the Student Services Department for approval;
- per Regulation 724-1, preapproved absences are discouraged and will only be granted on a case-by-case basis by the principal or designee. Family trips are encouraged to be scheduled during school holidays and over summer break. Absences for family trips will not be excused unless accompanied by extraordinary circumstances. A determination of whether extraordinary circumstances exist lies in the discretion of the principal, in collaboration with the Student Services Department. Such factors as the reason for the absence, the educational value of the proposed experience, and the impact of the absence on the student's academic progress will be given consideration in determining whether a prearranged absence is approved or disapproved;
- preapproved absence for certain reasons pertaining to a parent's military deployment;
- reasons of extenuating circumstances as judged by the principal;
- students experiencing homelessness who are awaiting transportation arrangements;
- parents/guardians retain the option of not permitting their child to attend school in circumstances when, in the judgement of the parent/guardian, the roads or walkways in their neighborhood are too hazardous to use;
- engaging in a civic event (middle and high school students only); and
- Out-of-school suspension. When a school administrator places a student on out-of-school suspension, the absence from school

shall be classified as excused.

Types of Unexcused Absences:

- all-day truancy;
- class truancy;
- missing a ride, or a bus, or car trouble;
- a virtual only student who does not sign in for live instruction for the class or school day using Canvas;
- a virtual only student who has not requested and been approved by the teacher and/or administrator for alternate attendance/participation procedure due to unique circumstances and does not turn on the camera or cannot be seen by the teacher during instruction and learning activities for the class or school day;
- failure to produce an appropriate explanation or requested documentation for an absence; and
- prearranged absences without prior approval of the school principal.

Per Virginia Code, the Virginia Department of Education, and PWCS Regulation 724-1, "Attendance and Excuses," schools will convene attendance intervention meetings and develop attendance improvement plans for students who accumulate five or more unexcused absences. Parents may be required to participate in attendance intervention meetings. Parents(s) of severely truant students may be subject to legal action for not complying with compulsory attendance laws.

Bullying – Bullying means any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. Bullying includes cyberbullying. Bullying does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict. Students should immediately report all incidents of bullying to a teacher, counselor, or administrator using the "Complaint of Bullying" form (page 39), verbally, or through other means of communication. Students are strongly encouraged to report bullying. Retaliation against a student who reports bullying or participates in an investigation regarding bullying is strictly prohibited and will be addressed by corrective action, up to and including further disciplinary action.

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying which involves the transmission, receipt, or display of electronic messages and/or images. Cyberbullying refers to any threats by one student toward another, typically through emails, texts, or on websites (e.g., blogs, social networking sites). Electronic communications that support deliberate, hostile, hurtful messages intended to harm others is a form of bullying. Cyberbullying includes such things as sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images; posting sensitive, private information about another person; pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad; and using defamatory online personal polling websites.

Cyberbullying that occurs at schools, on school property, at school-related activities, during virtual instruction, or within the community and impacts or disrupts the learning environment or school operations will not be tolerated. Likewise, any cyberbullying that occurs using PWCS computers, devices, systems, or networks, or on personal devices while using PWCS systems or networks (regardless of location) is strictly prohibited. Such misconduct is a violation of Regulation 295-1, "Computer Systems and Network Services – PWCS Responsible Use and Internet Safety Policy," and Regulation 733.01-1, "Bullying of Students."

Cyberbullying which occurs off school grounds and/or does not involve the use of PWCS computers, devices, systems, or networks may also result in disciplinary action if it causes or is likely to cause a material disruption to the operation of the school(s) or the School Division, threatens the safety or mental/physical well-being of students or staff, or threatens the safety of school buildings or school property.

Bystanders - Students who, by their presence and/or actions, encourage disruption, fights, or other violations of the COB are subject to corrective action. This includes, but is not limited to, bystanders who refuse to move or to follow other directions of school staff during disruptions, fights, etc.

Cars and Other Vehicles - Cars and other vehicles may be brought onto school grounds only with permission of the administration and must be operated in a safe manner in compliance with school rules and state and local laws. The owner and/or operator of any car or other vehicle which is located on or operated on school property consents, by virtue of such operation and/or location of the car or vehicle on school property, to the search of such vehicle when reasonable suspicion exists that prohibited items as described in Regulation 737-1, "Searches and Seizures," may be inside the vehicle. Violators are subject to corrective action at school, which may include loss of driving privileges on school grounds, out-of-school suspension (OSS), further disciplinary action, and applicable legal penalties.

Cheating and Plagiarism - Students are responsible for neither giving nor receiving assistance (written, orally, or otherwise) on tests,

examinations, final evaluations, or class assignments that are to be graded as the work of a single individual. Cheating includes the giving or receiving of a computer file, program, part of a program, or other computer-based information without specific teacher direction or approval. Cheating encompasses any violation of rules where the violation involved dishonesty.

The parent will be contacted, and the student will receive an intervention or consequence for academic violations. Schools shall incorporate the use of an honor pledge in their efforts to emphasize the importance of honesty.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating. Students are responsible for giving due recognition of sources from which material is quoted, summarized, or paraphrased, as well as to persons from whom assistance has been received. Submitting the intellectual work of another author or student as one's own, i.e. copy and pasted, copy and pasted with minor adjustments, or without explicit permission from the author, constitutes as cheating.

Communication Devices (Wireless) – Possession of communication devices by students on school grounds is a privilege, not a right, and any student who brings a communication device on school property consents to these rules and to the School Division's right to confiscate and/or search such devices as provided in these rules. Any expectation of privacy related to the use of student or staff-owned devices is negated by the failure to comply with relevant School Board policies and regulations. Students may possess wireless communication devices including, but not limited to, cell phones, tablets, and eReaders on school grounds provided that these devices are used only at the times and in the manner specified by PWCS regulations, as implemented by school principals and staff. The use of these devices may be prohibited at specific times and locations to maintain the integrity of an academic environment. Any violation of such prohibitions to include on or off school property may result in disciplinary action. Wireless communication devices may be used on school buses provided that the device does not distract the driver, compromise safety, or violate other school bus rules and regulations. Videotaping, recording, or photographing students or other occupants of any type where as such activity invades the privacy of others or is used to harass, embarrass, humiliate, or harm others, or where in the judgement of school staff, is disruptive and/or otherwise diverts the attention from school operations and/or the learning environment and impedes upon the ability to maintain a positive climate and culture is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action. Violators are subject to confiscation of the communication device and/or other corrective action. Searches of communication devices may be conducted if the administrator has a reasonable suspicion that it is being used or has been used for conduct that is criminal or a violation of the COB. School Division staff do not assume responsibility for the security of communication and/or electronic devices that are brought onto school property. While on school property, at any school-related activities, or while traveling to and from school or any school-related activities, students shall neither take nor display video graphic or still images of a person who is undressed or partially undressed. Violators may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including further disciplinary action.

Discrimination - Discrimination occurs when one or more individuals are treated differently or not given fair consideration or the same opportunity as others because of their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions including lactation, age, marital status, veteran status, disability, genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by law. Discrimination against students or staff is strictly prohibited. Students who believe that they have been discriminated against are encouraged to report the matter to the school principal or to the Equity and Student Relations Department at TitleIXEquity@pwcs.edu or 571-374-6839.

Dishonesty - Students shall not make false accusations against staff or other students and shall not give false information that may be harmful to others or interfere with the duties of staff.

Disobedience/Disrespect - No student shall disregard or disobey any reasonable request made by a school staff member. Any student who directs profanity, threats, or other forms of verbal abuse toward a school staff member shall be subject to OSS and considered for further disciplinary action.

Disruption - No student while on school property, at a school-sponsored activity, or on school buses shall behave in a disorderly manner or in any other way interrupt or disturb the orderly operation of the school. Conduct occurring off school grounds that causes disruption to the school, the educational process, or the rights of the students or staff may also result in corrective action at school.

Drug and Substance Abuse - No student shall have or use alcohol, drugs, or anything that resembles alcohol or drugs (see page 22).

Electronic Entertainment Devices - Students may utilize electronic entertainment devices while traveling to and from school provided that these items are not a distraction to the bus driver and/or do not compromise safety. In addition, the use of these devices should not distract from or disrupt activities. During the school day or at school-sponsored events and activities, students may not record audio or video footage intended to be used or distributed to cause harm to other students or adults, or which may cause a disruption to the instructional process. Violators are subject to confiscation of the device and/or other corrective action. School Division staff do not assume responsibility for the security of communication and/or electronic devices that are brought onto school property. While on school property, at any school-related activities, or while traveling to and from school or any school-related

activities, students shall neither take nor display video graphic or still images of a person who is undressed or partially undressed. Violators may be subject to further disciplinary action.

Endangering Others - Student conduct that may put others in danger will not be permitted. This includes, but is not limited to, violations of fire regulations, making false fire reports, lighting matches, lighting any flame not an approved part of classroom instruction, use of incendiary or explosive materials, and threats or attempts to bomb, burn, or destroy, in any manner, school property or the property of school personnel or students.

Failure to Report Violations - In order to maintain safety and security in our schools, students are responsible for reporting serious violations of the COB to teachers, administrators, other appropriate staff, or the PWCS "Say Something" Anonymous Reporting System (SS-ARS). Serious violations include conduct or behavior which results, or may result, in injury to the person, health, or welfare of students or staff, or damage to property. Failure to report violations may result in corrective action. (See also "Students," pages 9-11 and "Weapons and Other Dangerous Articles," page 23.)

Fighting - Students are responsible for settling confrontations that may arise in a peaceful manner and without the use of violence. When students feel that they are unable to settle disagreements in a peaceful manner, they should seek assistance from school personnel, such as a teacher, counselor, principal, social worker, etc. Fighting will result in corrective action, which may include suspension or further disciplinary action. Students are also subject to corrective action for behavior they may not consider to be serious or threatening ("horseplay," "playing around," etc.) when that behavior may cause injury, discomfort, or disruption.

Gambling - Gambling on school property is strictly prohibited. Gambling is defined as the betting of money or valuables on the outcome of a game, contest, or event.

Gangs - Gang activity, recruitment, and expressions of gang membership will not be tolerated. Actions, speech, gestures, clothing, symbols, or other signs of gang membership or gang activity are prohibited at school and at school-related activities. Any student involved in a gang-related fight or assault shall be considered for further disciplinary action.

Group Assault - Group assault in school, at school-related activities, or on the way to and from school is strictly prohibited. Any student who participates in a group assault which results in disruption or disturbance at school or school-related activities is subject to corrective action, up to and including further disciplinary action. Any two or more students with the intent of doing harm to persons, property, or the school environment may be considered a group under this rule.

Harassment - Harassment is a form of discrimination. Harassment is a course of conduct that targets one or more individuals on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions including lactation, age, marital status, veteran status, disability, genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by law. Harassment demeans, threatens, intimidates, or harms an individual or group in such a way as to cause anxiety or fear for safety. Harassment of students or staff for any reason is prohibited. Students who believe that they have been harassed are encouraged to report the matter to the school principal or to the Equity and Student Relations Department at TitleIXEquity@pwcs.edu or 571-374-6839.

Hazing - Students shall not engage in behavior that recklessly or intentionally endangers the health or safety of others or inflicts bodily injury on a student in connection with initiation, affiliation, or admission into a club, group organization, or student body. Violators are subject to corrective measures, up to and including suspension, further disciplinary action, and possible criminal consequences.

Improper Touching - Improper touching is intentional physical contact with a student or staff member that does not fall within the definitions of physical assault or of sexual assault under Title IX. (See the definition of Title IX Sexual Harassment below.) Improper touching may or may not be sexual in nature. Improper touching that occurs on school property or at a school-sponsored activity is prohibited.

Indecent Material - No student shall possess, wear/display, produce, or distribute indecent (vulgar, obscene, profane, patently offensive) materials including, but not limited to, clothing, posters, stickers, written/printed materials, CDs, DVDs, and computer-based materials.

Laser Pointers - Students shall not have laser pointers or other laser devices at school, on school buses, or at school-related activities without the permission of a school administrator or faculty member. Violators are subject to corrective measures and may have the pointer/device confiscated.

Littering - Students shall help maintain a clean and healthful school environment by properly disposing of trash while in the cafeteria,

classrooms, hallways, and elsewhere in the school and on school grounds, buses, bus stops, and at school-related activities.

Offenses Off of School Grounds - Actions outside of school which have a detrimental impact on the school building, programs, students, or staff will not be tolerated. The School Board and PWCS staff are committed to maintaining the schools as safe and healthy places in which to learn, free from the impact of violence, weapons, gang activity, substance abuse, and other harmful influences. Students are subject to corrective measures at school, up to and including further disciplinary actions, for offenses which occur in the community or at other locations off of school grounds if those offenses result or may foreseeably result in material disruption to the operation of the school, the educational process, or impact the rights, safety, or welfare of students, staff, or school property. Under Virginia law, a student may be suspended or expelled if found guilty in court of the manufacture, sale, gift, distribution, or possession of drugs even if the offense is not connected with school. Furthermore, Virginia law provides that a student may be reassigned or placed in an alternative education program (alternative school, night school, online resources, etc.) upon notice that the student has been charged with certain school-reportable criminal offenses, including offenses relating to weapons, alcohol/drugs, intentional injury to another person, or if convicted or found not innocent of other school-reportable offenses, as set forth in Regulation 681-1, "Nontraditional Education Programs." Conviction or adjudication of certain school-reportable criminal charges may result in reassignment, long-term suspension, or expulsion. Students may also be reassigned, placed in nontraditional education programs, suspended, or expelled when they have committed a serious offense or repeated offenses in violation of School Board policies and regulations.

Profanity - No student shall use vulgar, lewd, patently offensive, or indecent language or gestures.

Retaliation – Retaliation is strictly prohibited and occurs when action is taken against a person for making a report of misconduct or for participating in any investigation into a report of misconduct. Retaliation includes threatening, intimidating, harassing, coercing, or any other conduct that would discourage someone from reporting an offense or participating in an investigation.

Search and Seizure - Students will be held responsible for items which they have at school or at school-related activities. Student desks and lockers are the property of the school, and school officials reserve the right to search them. Lockers or desks may be searched to repossess school property or to locate materials which are not permitted in school. Students, their belongings, and items under their control (including cars) may be searched under certain circumstances as described in Regulation 737-1, "Search and Seizures." The student's individual right to privacy and freedom from unreasonable search and seizure is balanced by the school's responsibility to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all persons within the school community. Should illegal materials be found during a search, law enforcement officials will be notified. If students refuse to be searched when the administration has reasonable suspicion that the students possess or have under their control prohibited items as defined in the regulation, parents and/or authorities will be contacted, and the students may be subject to disciplinary action.

Smoking - All PWCS schools are smoke-free environments. Smoking and vaping are not permitted in any building in PWCS at any time. Students, regardless of age, are not permitted to smoke or be in possession of tobacco products, nicotine vapor paraphernalia, cigarettes, matches, lighters, or other electronic smoking devices, on school buses, in school buildings, on school property, or at an on-site or off-site school-sponsored activity.

Students involved in the possession or use of tobacco or nicotine vapor products shall receive penalties ranging from OSS to other effective options assigned by the principal as appropriate deterrents for individual students. These options may include OSS, in-school suspension (ISS), detention, school/community projects, and charges filed with local authorities. Educational programs are available at the middle and high school level to help students better understand the negative health consequences associated with smoking and nicotine use.

Stalking – Stalking is a course of conduct directed at specific individuals that causes the persons to: 1. fear for their safety or the safety of others; or 2. suffer substantial emotional distress. Stalking behavior may include, but is not limited to, making repeated and unwanted contact with the victim through phone calls, mail, emails, texts, or social media; following the victim; making threats to the victim, either directly or indirectly; and damaging or threatening to damage the victim's property.

Student Dress and Grooming – Students are urged to dress for success each school day. Their overall appearance, while on school grounds or virtually, should be based on the health and safety of an inclusive school community. It is understood that student dress may reflect outdoor weather conditions throughout the school year, however, students should refrain from wearing any item of clothing which may cause a distraction or disruption to the educational process or compromise the physical and emotional health and safety of the student or others. Students whose appearance disrupts instruction may be asked to change clothing.

Virginia Code §§ 22.1-276.01 and 22.1-279.6 enacted on July 1, 2020, requires the following with regard to dress and grooming codes:

Requires the Virginia Board of Education to include in its guidelines and model policies for codes of student conduct (i) standards for reducing bias and harassment in the enforcement of any code of student conduct and (ii) standards for dress or grooming codes, which the law defines as any practice, policy, or portion of a code of student conduct adopted by a school board that governs or restricts the attire of any enrolled student. These laws permit any school board to include in its code of student conduct a dress or grooming code and requires any such dress or grooming code to (a) permit any student to wear any religiously and ethnically specific or significant head covering or hairstyle, including hijabs, yarmulkes, headwraps, braids, locs, and cornrows; (b) maintain gender neutrality by subjecting any student to the same set of rules and standards regardless of gender; (c) not have a disparate impact on students of a particular gender; (d) be clear, specific, and objective in defining terms, if used; (e) prohibit any school board employee from enforcing the dress or grooming code by direct physical contact with a student or a student's attire; and (f) prohibit any school board employee from requiring a student to undress in front of any other individual, including the enforcing school board employee, to comply with the dress or grooming code.

The PWCS student dress and grooming guidelines follow the State guidance and are created to ensure equity in student expression and staff enforcement and are not intended to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by law. Students are permitted to wear any religiously and ethnically specific or significant head covering or hairstyle.

Permitted head coverings and hairstyles include, but are not limited to:

- hijabs;
- yarmulkes;
- headwraps;
- braids;
- locs; and
- cornrows.

Also consistent with Virginia Code §§ 22.1-276.01 and 22.1-279.6, these dress and grooming guidelines were created to maintain gender neutrality by creating equitable standards regardless of gender and to not have a disparate impact on students of a particular gender.

Prohibited items of clothing include:

Clothing items which:

- reveal bare skin to the extent that they distract or may foreseeably distract other students or staff;
- reveal or expose undergarments;
- fit in a manner as to reveal or expose undergarments;
- contain vulgar, discriminatory, lewd, patently offensive, or obscene language or images;
- contain threats or gang symbols;
- promotes the use of weapons and violence, or the use of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs, and/or associated paraphernalia;
- cause or may foreseeably cause a disruption to the learning environment; and
- accessories which could be regarded as or used as a weapon.

Headwear which covers one's entire head or face with the following exceptions:

- worn as part of one's religion; or
- worn for medical reasons; or
- worn for personal prevention practices as in the case of the spread of infectious diseases; or
- worn for an approved school event; or
- worn as an expression of one's cultural or ethnical background.

Technology Misuse - Computers, computer networks, and other electronic technology shall be used only for **valid educational purposes and only with the approval of a school staff member**. When using electronic technology in the school, students are required to abide by the COB and by "Acceptable Use Guidelines" - telecommunications technologies (internet, telnet, desktop video conference, electronic mail, etc.) available upon request from school staff. Students must also adhere to the standards defined by PWCS Policy 295, "Standards for Computer Systems and Network Services," Regulation 295-1, "Computer Systems and Network Services - PWCS Responsible Use and Internet Safety Policy," and Regulation 295-2, "Website Development and Implementation."

Copies of these policies and regulations are available online at www.pwcs.edu. Unacceptable uses of technology include, but are not limited to:

- violating the privacy rights of others;
- using, producing, distributing, or receiving profanity, obscenity, or material that bullies, harasses, offends, threatens, or degrades others. This includes, cyberbullying, a form of bullying which involves the transmission, receipt, or display of electronic messages or images;
- producing, transmitting, possessing, and/or sharing images, messages, or other material of a sexual nature using a wireless communication device;
- copying commercial software in violation of copyright law;
- using technology for financial gain or commercial or illegal activity;
- using technology for product advertisement or political endorsement;
- reposting personal communications without the author's prior consent;
- using technology in violation of other rules and regulations of the COB; and
- use of technology off school property which has a material effect on the operation or general welfare of the School Division, impacts the integrity of the educational process, threatens the safety and welfare of students, staff, or school property, occurs when the student is under the school's authority in loco parentis, or otherwise invades the rights of students or staff.

Violation of this policy and the "Acceptable Use Guidelines" may result in corrective action, loss of technology-use privileges, and penalties under law. Willful irresponsibility may be viewed as malicious and may lead to corrective action or criminal penalties. Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt technology system performance will be viewed as criminal activity under applicable state and federal law.

Theft - Taking without permission or attempting to take without permission school property or personal property of others is expressly forbidden. All incidents involving theft or attempted theft of student prescription medications shall be reported to the principal or designee. Violators are subject to corrective action at school and may be referred to appropriate authorities for legal action.

Threat - A threat is a concerning communication or behavior that indicates that an individual poses a danger to the safety of school staff or students through acts of violence or other behavior that would cause harm to self or others. The threat may be expressed/communicated behaviorally, orally, visually, in writing, electronically, or through any other means; and is considered a threat regardless of whether it is observed by or communicated directly to the target of the threat or observed by or communicated to a third party; and regardless of whether the target of the threat is aware of the threat. Each school has a threat assessment team for the assessment of and intervention with individuals whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of school staff or students. PWCS threat assessment procedures are set forth in Regulation 777-1, "Threat Assessment Procedures."

Title IX Sexual Harassment – Sexual harassment under Title IX ("Title IX Sexual Harassment") is misconduct (on the basis of sex that meets one of the following conditions: 1. a PWCS employee provides or offers to provide a PWCS aid, benefit, or service to an individual in exchange for the individual's participation in sexual conduct; 2. a student or staff member is subjected to unwelcome conduct that is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that the individual is denied equal access to a PWCS educational program or activity; or 3. dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking as defined by the U.S. Code and Regulation 738-1. Title IX is a federal law that prohibits sex-based discrimination, including harassment, in schools. Title IX Sexual Harassment allegations are addressed under Regulation 738-1, "Resolution of Allegations Against Students of Sexual Misconduct." Conduct of a sexual nature that negatively impacts a student, staff member, or the educational process, but does not meet this definition of Title IX Sexual Harassment, may also be subject to discipline under the COB. Students who believe they have been sexually harassed or the targets of mistreatment based on sex or sex stereotyping are encouraged to report the matter to the school principal or to the Equity and Student Relations Department at TitleIXEquity@pwcs.edu or 571-374-6839.

Trespassing - Students must be in approved areas of the school building and grounds during normal school hours or after hours with the permission of a school staff member. Students are considered to be trespassing if they are present at a school other than the school in which they are enrolled unless they are attending an approved school activity or have the approval of a school staff member. Students serving an OSS are not allowed on school property without the written permission of the principal. Unless the student has written permission from school officials to be on school property, a school bus, or at a school-sponsored event, students whose disciplinary cases are pending a long-term suspension or further disciplinary action decision (with the exception of disciplinary hearings) are prohibited from school property, school buses, and school-sponsored activities. Students who are trespassing on any school property are subject to arrest and corrective action at school. All visitors must report directly to the office.

Truancy - Attendance at school is compulsory until age 18 unless the student has been exempted by law, has graduated, or has completed a GED® program. School attendance officers are authorized to enforce attendance requirements and to refer students and/or parents to the courts for legal action, if necessary.

Vandalism - No student shall maliciously or willfully damage, deface, or destroy school property, or the personal belongings of others. (This includes graffiti, as well as computer and other electronic vandalism.) Students are responsible for reimbursing the School Board for actual breakage or destruction of property, or for the failure to return property owned by or under the control of the School Board. Corrective action may be taken against students who fail to return property owned by or under the control of the School Board. Virginia law authorizes the School Board to take legal action to recover the cost of such damage from the parents of such students.

Violations of School, Sport, Club, and Activity Rules - In addition to the rules and regulations of the COB, students are expected to comply with rules established by their schools and with the rules of the sports, clubs, and activities in which they participate. Violators are subject to corrective action as described in the COB or as stated in the school's handbook. Students may be suspended from participation in sports, clubs, or other school-sponsored activities for violations of the rules of the team or activity, even if the violation occurs off school grounds and outside the school day. This includes, but is not limited to, violations of team training rules related to the use of tobacco, nicotine vapor products, alcohol, and other drugs.

Weapons - Students shall not have weapons, look-alike weapons, or other harmful objects on any school property or during any school events. (See page 23.)

Attention

It should be noted that the School Board and PWCS staff strictly prohibit the possession, use, and distribution of drugs and weapons, threats, or acts of violence which harm or endanger others, and threats and/or battery against any staff member which could fit the definition of any unwanted touching. Violators are subject to severe consequences, up to and including expulsion from PWCS.

Rules and Regulations

School Bus Rules

General

All rules set forth for student behavior in Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) policies, regulations, and this Code of Behavior (COB), apply to student behavior on the school bus and at the bus stop or any other approved PWCS vehicle used to transport students to and from school and/or school associated events and activities.

Section § 22.1-176 of the Virginia Code permits school boards to provide transportation for pupils but does not require them to do so. For PWCS, daily bus service will be provided for all in-boundary students living in excess of one mile from school. Students eligible for transportation may be required to walk up to one mile to reach their regular bus stop. Transportation is not provided for students living within a school's established walking boundary.

Express bus service will be provided for students enrolled in all Specialty Programs. This service will be to and from express bus stops only. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide transportation to/from express bus stops. In many cases, these stops may be two to three miles from the student's residence.

Wireless communication devices may be used on school buses provided that the device does not distract the driver, compromise safety, or violate other school bus rules and regulations.

Meeting the Bus

State law requires that buses operate on the same routes, as per their schedules, on a daily basis. Parent(s) or their designees are requested to accompany their young child(ren) to and from the bus stop. Families are encouraged to sign up for Here Comes the Bus™ from their PWCS Mobile App. This is a helpful tool for tracking school buses.

Students should:

- be on time;
- arrive at their bus stop at least five to 10 minutes before the regular pickup time;

- stand away from the road. Do not stand on the travel portion of the roadway while waiting for a bus;
- maintain proper conduct;
- respect the property of others;
- wait until the bus has stopped, then walk to the front door. Do not run alongside a moving bus;
- board the bus in an orderly fashion; and
- use the bus stop closest to their home. Walking to a friend's house to catch a bus often causes overcrowding at a given stop.

Students riding the bus should:

- obey instructions of bus driver and/or bus attendant;
- be seated immediately;
- remain seated, facing forward;
- share seats equally;
- be courteous;
- respect property;
- keep all body parts inside bus;
- keep aisles clear; and
- maintain good conduct.

The following infractions are not permitted:

- igniting fire;
- fighting;
- smoking;
- using profanity;
- horseplay;
- eating/drinking;
- spitting;
- using obscene gestures;
- vandalizing;
- throwing objects from the bus;
- creating loud noises;
- having glass objects;
- transporting large objects;
- videotaping, recording, or photography, resulting in harm to others, disruption or distraction of the driver;
- tampering with equipment;
- having weapons;
- using, possessing, or distributing drugs or other substances and related paraphernalia;
- littering;
- making threats;
- endangering others; and
- other violations of the COB.

Leaving the Bus

Students must:

- remain seated until the bus comes to a full stop;
- leave the bus in an orderly manner, students in the front seats first;
- leave the bus stop area when safety permits as soon as discharged from the bus;
- not linger around the bus;
- cross the street, if necessary to do so, at the front of the bus and at a distance of at least 10 feet in front of the bus; and
- not cross until the driver has signaled that it is safe to do so. Crossing four or more traffic lanes or a divided roadway is prohibited.

If a disciplinary problem occurs in the afternoon and the problem is such that in the judgment of the driver it is unsafe to proceed, the driver may return to the school to seek immediate disciplinary action and/or assistance. Bus drivers are instructed to report any infractions to the school principal/designee.

Changing Buses

Students must submit a written request from the parent to go to another stop other than their regularly scheduled stop on their regularly scheduled bus or to ride an alternate bus. This written request is subject to approval of the school principal or designee before entering the bus. Bus drivers must receive notification by the school office when approval is given to a student to change to an alternate stop or bus.

No change will be made in the location of bus stops or bus routing without approval by the Transportation Department.

No change in the bus assigned may be made without the permission of the school principal and the Transportation Department.

Trespassing

Only authorized persons are permitted aboard a school bus (school property). “It shall be unlawful for any person, whether or not a student, to enter upon or remain upon any school property after having been directed to vacate the property by a person authorized to give such direction” (Virginia Code § 18.2-128).

Riding the School Bus is a Privilege*

Should a student be reported to the principal, the principal will be responsible for disciplinary action, which may include the loss of the privilege of bus transportation, until the parent, the bus driver, the principal, and in some instances, a Transportation Department representative can arrive at an understanding that will correct the problem. The parent will be responsible for the transportation of students who have lost school bus transportation privileges.

If you have questions, please refer to Regulation 431-4, “Transportation for Students.”

Oral or written threats to harm others or PWCS property, which are planned or made on a school bus or which are intended to be carried out on a school bus, at a school bus stop, or while going to and coming from school, may result in the loss of transportation for a specific period of time or for the remainder of the school year in addition to other disciplinary action.

A School Bus Video Observation System records activities aboard some buses. Please feel free to contact the school principal or the Transportation Department for help with problems related to the transportation of your child.

*Riding the school bus is a privilege, except as required by law for students with disabilities.

Rules and Regulations

Prohibited Substances

The rules governing those substances prohibited by Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) are summarized in this section. Please refer to Regulation 735-1, "Prohibited Substances," for all information pertaining to this subject.

In accordance with Virginia Code § 22.1-277.08, the School Board shall, but are not required to, expel any student determined to have brought a controlled substance, imitation controlled substance, or marijuana, as defined in Virginia Code § 18.2-247, onto school property or to a school-sponsored activity. Students who violate the law shall be referred to local authorities for appropriate action in the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system. However, the School Board and/or Superintendent or designee (the level associate superintendents, the director of SMAPD, or an SMAPD hearing officer) shall have the authority to modify the type of disciplinary action when special circumstances exist, based on the facts of a particular situation. Special circumstances include, but are not limited to, the statutory criteria set forth at § 22.1-277.06 (C) of the Virginia Code, as described in Regulation 745-1, "Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion of Students."

The list of prohibited substances and paraphernalia for which a student may be expelled under the rules of PWCS is broader than the list of prohibited substances for which the law mandates expulsion. Even if the prohibited substances or related paraphernalia do not fall within the class of substances prohibited by law, a student shall be subject to expulsion if the student is involved in the possession, use, receipt or attempted receipt, purchase or attempted purchase, or distribution or attempted distribution, of prohibited substances or paraphernalia, unless the Superintendent's designee (the level associate superintendent, the director of SMAPD, or a SMAPD hearing officer) or the School Board finds that special circumstances justify a lesser disciplinary action, or no action at all, based on the facts of a particular situation. In some cases, there may be a question about whether or not the possession, use, or distribution of a substance or object is a violation. The nature and appearance of the substance or related paraphernalia, its purpose, and how it was used, or intended to be used, shall be considered when making decisions about disciplinary action.

Duty to Report Prohibited Substances - All PWCS employees and students are required to notify the principal, assistant principal, any community resource officer, security personnel, teacher, or other school employee immediately if they have reason to believe that there are, or are likely to be, prohibited substances or related paraphernalia in school, on school grounds, on school buses, at bus stops, on the way to or from school, or at any school-related activity. Students who have such knowledge but fail to report the presence or anticipated presence of prohibited substances or related paraphernalia may themselves be subject to disciplinary action. The principal or the principal's designee shall retain commensurate authority to immediately act within School Division policy to assure the safety and welfare of students and staff. The resources of the School Division and local police department shall be available to assist the principal in this action.

Consequences of a Prohibited Substance Violation - Any student accused of committing a prohibited substance violation may be subject to disciplinary action. This may include a five-day suspension with an informal conference with the principal or assistant principal to gather information regarding the incident. Following the informal conference, the school administrator will confer with the appropriate level associate superintendent, and determine if a recommendation to SMAPD for further disciplinary action may be warranted, in which case the procedures set forth in Regulation 745-1, "Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion of Students," Regulation 745-2, "Discipline of Students with Disabilities," and Regulation 747-1, "Student Management and Alternative Programs Department (SMAPD)," shall be followed as appropriate. Principals, or their designated representatives, may offer substance abuse offenders and their parents the opportunity to voluntarily participate in the New Horizons Program at the high school level.

A substance abuse suspension shall also result in an immediate suspension for a minimum of 30 calendar days from participation in all school activities (teams, clubs, and all other school-sponsored activities), including practice. Unless the student has written permission from school officials to be on school property, a school bus, or at a school-sponsored event, students whose disciplinary cases are pending a long-term suspension or expulsion decision (with the exception of disciplinary hearings) are prohibited from school property, school buses, and school-sponsored activities. Whether suspended from school or not, coaches and/or sponsors, with the approval of the school administration, may suspend students from participation in school-sponsored activities for violations of the rules of the team, club, or activity regarding prohibited substances. This includes violation of rules regarding prohibited substances committed off school grounds and outside the school day. The student may also be subject to disciplinary probation for 90 calendar days during which time principals may require subsequent follow-up with the substance abuse prevention staff.

Rules and Regulations

Weapons and Other Dangerous Articles

The rules governing weapons and other objects prohibited by Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) are summarized in this section. Please refer to Regulation 775-1, “Weapons and Other Prohibited Objects,” for all information pertaining to this subject.

To assure the safety and welfare of students, staff, and other persons on school property or at school activities and to protect school property, weapons and other prohibited items shall not be permitted on any school property, on school buses, going to or from school, or at any school-related activity, regardless of where that activity takes place. School property means any real property owned or leased by the School Board or any vehicle owned, leased, or operated by or on behalf of the School Board. Students may also be subject to disciplinary action for weapons offenses which occur off school grounds, if the offense results or is foreseeably likely to result in material disruption to the operation of the school, if the offense is planned in school or at school activities, if the offense occurs when the student is under the school’s authority in loco parentis, if the offense threatens the safety and welfare of students, staff, or school property, or if the offense is otherwise connected to the school.

Mandatory Expulsion for Certain Weapon/Firearm Offenses - In accordance with the federal Gun-Free Schools Act and Virginia law, the School Board must expel from school attendance for not less than one year (365 days) any student who is determined to have possessed a firearm, destructive device, firearm muffler, firearm silencer, or pneumatic gun on any school property, on a school bus, or at any school-related activity. However, the School Board and/or Superintendent or designee (the level associate superintendents, the director of the Student Management and Alternative Programs Department (SMAPD), or an SMAPD hearing officer) shall have the authority to modify the term of expulsion for such offenses, or the type of disciplinary action when special circumstances exist based on the facts of a particular situation. Special circumstances include, but are not limited to, the statutory criteria set forth at § 22.1-277.06 (C) of the Virginia Code, as described in Regulation 745-1, “Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion of Students.” Students who violate this law shall be referred to local authorities for appropriate action in the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system.

The list of weapons and prohibited objects for which a student may be expelled under the rules of PWCS is broader than the list of weapons for which the law mandates expulsion. Even if the weapon does not fall within the class of weapons prohibited by law, students shall be recommended for expulsion for the possession, use, receipt or attempted receipt, purchase or attempted purchase, distribution or attempted distribution, of all weapons or prohibited objects on school property or at school-related activities or otherwise connected to the school, unless the Superintendent’s designee (the principal in conjunction with the level associate superintendent, the director of SMAPD, or an SMAPD hearing officer) finds that special circumstances justify a lesser disciplinary action or no action at all. In some cases, there may be a question about whether or not the possession, use, and distribution of an object is a violation. The type of object, its purpose, and how it was used or intended to be used shall be considered when making decisions about disciplinary action.

Duty to Report Weapons and Prohibited Objects - All PWCS employees and students are required to notify the principal, assistant principal, any community resource officer, security personnel, teacher, or school employee **immediately** if they have reason to believe that there is, or is likely to be, a weapon in school, on school grounds, on school buses, at bus stops, or at any school-related activity. Students who have such knowledge but fail to report the presence or anticipated presence of a weapon may themselves be subject to disciplinary action. The principal or the principal’s designee shall retain commensurate authority to immediately act within School Division policy to assure the safety and welfare of students and staff. Resources of the School Division and local police department shall be available to assist in this action. Students who discover that they are in possession of an object that may be considered a “weapon,” should report to an administrator or other staff member immediately. Follow-up action will take into consideration that the student voluntarily brought this to the attention of the staff.

Consequences of a Weapons Violation - Any student accused of an offense involving a weapon or other prohibited object(s), shall have an informal conference with the principal or assistant principal of the school. Following the conference and review with the level associate superintendent, a recommendation for expulsion or other disciplinary action shall be made, in which case the procedures set forth in Regulation 745-1, “Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion of Students,” Regulation 747-1, “Student Management and Alternative Programs Department (SMAPD),” or Regulation 745-2, “Discipline of Students with Disabilities,” shall be followed as appropriate.

Summary of Discipline Code

The philosophy of Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) is directed toward a preventative and restorative approach to unwanted behavior, which aligns with Virginia Department of Education's "Model Guidance for Positive and Preventative Code of Student Conduct Policy and Alternatives to Suspension." If students are denied the opportunity to learn as a result of unwanted behavior, the teacher, the principal, and/or other appropriate educational staff members shall determine the proper corrective measure utilizing a graduated response system which incorporates instructional, restorative, and age-appropriate responses. When a student's behavior is unresponsive to interventions and increases in frequency, intensity and duration, the level of response may increase in severity.

The following student behavior categories, as defined by the Virginia Department of Education, were designed to assist in recognizing the impact the behavior has on the school learning environment and to encourage responses that promote social-emotional learning competencies.

- **Behaviors that Impede Academic Progress (BAP):**
These behaviors impede academic progress of the student or of students. They are typically indicative of the student's lack of self-management or self-awareness. Sometimes, the student may need help in understanding how the behavior impacts others. Therefore, as a result, training in social awareness may also be indicated.
- **Behaviors Related to School Operations (BSO):**
These behaviors interfere with the daily operation of school procedures. Students exhibiting these behaviors may need to develop self-management, self-awareness, or social awareness skills.
- **Relationship Behaviors (RB):**
These behaviors create a negative relationship between two or more people that does not result in physical harm. Relationship behaviors affect the whole school community in that the school climate is often a reflection of how people treat one another. Students who exhibit difficulty with relationship behaviors may also have difficulty with the other social-emotional competencies.
- **Behaviors that Present a Safety Concern (BSC):**
These behaviors create unsafe conditions for students, staff, and visitors to the school. The underlying reasons for this type of behavior may lie in any of the social-emotional competencies, so the administrator should investigate the underlying motivation for the student's behavior. Training in social awareness and decision-making are usually indicated in any behavior that creates a safety concern.
- **Behaviors that Endanger Self or Others (BESO):**
These behaviors endanger the health, safety, or welfare of either the student or others in the school community. Behaviors that rise to this level of severity are often complex. While they are indicative of poor decision-making skills, students who exhibit these behaviors may also have developmental needs in the other social-emotional competencies.
- **Persistently Dangerous Behaviors (PDB):**
These behaviors are used in calculations to identify a school as persistently dangerous. "The incidents to be used as measures for determining persistently dangerous public schools are those violent crimes and offenses against a person and the possession of drugs with intent to distribute or sell, all designated as felonies in the criminal section of the *Code of Virginia (Title 18.2)*." These behaviors merit a report to the superintendent's office and to law enforcement and should be addressed in the manner consistent with a level 5 response.

The rules and regulations of the Code of Behavior (COB) are intended to guide students' behavior in the school buildings, on school buses, to and from school, and during participation in any activity sponsored by PWCS. As set forth in the COB, conduct currently viewed as just cause for disciplinary action shall include, but not be limited to, any one of the violations listed below. These behaviors may result in administrative responses ranging from Level 1 to Level 5B as shown in the following table.

Student Behavior Categories

* The following chart identifies the disciplinary consequences recommended by the Virginia Department of Education in response to certain misconduct. Disciplinary responses are not limited to those identified and may be elevated to a higher administrative response level for repeated conduct or conduct that involves aggravating circumstances, resulting in disciplinary consequences exceeding these guidelines.

Behavior Category	Behavior Description	Possible Administrative Response* (Administrative responses may vary in level)	Possible Tiers of Response
<p>CATEGORY A</p> <p>BEHAVIORS THAT IMPEDE ACADEMIC PROGRESS (BAP)</p> <p>(These behaviors that impede the academic progress of students include, but are not limited to, the following.)</p>	<p>Elementary schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking and excessive noise in the classroom • Off-task; out of seat • Possessing items that distract learning in the classroom • Excessive noise in the hallway • Interrupting other classes • Cheating • Unexcused tardiness to class or to school <p>Middle and high schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interfering with learning in the classroom • Interfering with learning outside the classroom • Academic dishonesty • Chronic failure to be prepared for class • Unexcused tardiness to class or to school 	<p>Level 1: Classroom supports, interventions, or minor consequences</p> <p>Level 2: Minor consequences up to suspension for a maximum of three days</p>	<p>TIER I TIER II TIER III</p>
<p>CATEGORY B</p> <p>BEHAVIORS RELATED TO SCHOOL OPERATIONS (BSO)</p> <p>(These behaviors that interfere with the daily operation of school procedures include, but are not limited to, the following.)</p>	<p>Elementary, middle, and high schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Altering an official document • Bringing/allowing unauthorized persons on to school grounds • Dishonesty/giving false information to staff • Failure to report to assigned classes or disciplinary setting while on school grounds • Gambling • Horseplay • Inappropriate student dress • Misuse of communication devices • Unauthorized use of school electronic equipment • Inappropriate use of technology/internet policy • Vandalism, graffiti, or damage to school or personal property 	<p>Level 1: Classroom supports, interventions, or minor consequences</p> <p>Level 2: Minor consequences up to suspension for a maximum of three days</p> <p>Level 3: Suspension between four and five days</p>	<p>TIER I TIER II TIER III</p>
<p>CATEGORY C</p> <p>RELATIONSHIP BEHAVIORS (RB)</p> <p>(These behaviors that create a negative relationship between two or more people that does not result in physical harm include, but are not limited to, the following.)</p>	<p>Elementary, middle, and high schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying/cyberbullying • Failure to respond to requests by staff • Inappropriate physical contact that is sexual in nature • Posting, distributing, displaying, or sharing material or literature, including electronically • Saying or writing either directly or electronically sexually suggestive comments, propositions, or other remarks • Sexual misconduct (other than Title IX Sexual Harassment) • Speaking to another in an uncivil, discourteous manner • Teasing, taunting, engaging in a verbal confrontation, verbally inciting a fight • Using profane or vulgar language or gestures (swearing, cursing, hate speech, gang signs, or gestures) • Using slurs based upon the actual or perceived race, ethnicity, color, national origin, citizenship/immigration status, weight, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law 	<p>Level 1: Classroom supports, interventions, or minor consequences</p> <p>Level 2: Minor consequences up to suspension for a maximum of three days</p> <p>Level 3: Suspension between four and five days</p>	<p>TIER II TIER III</p>

Behavior Category	Behavior Description	Possible Administrative Response (Administrative responses may vary in level)	Possible Tiers of Response
<p>CATEGORY D</p> <p>BEHAVIORS OF A SAFETY CONCERN (BSC)</p> <p>(These behaviors that create unsafe conditions for students, staff, and visitors to the school include, but are not limited to, the following.)</p>	<p>Elementary, middle, and high schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possession, using, or distributing • Any threat of physical injury or attempt to bomb or destroy property or buildings • Bullying/cyberbully: Continuous after interventions • Bus: Distracting the driver, endangering the safety of others on the bus • Drugs: Possessing drug paraphernalia, over-the-counter medication, or look-alike drugs • Engaging in reckless behavior creating risk of injury to self or others, which includes behaviors that intentionally endanger the health, safety, and welfare of others • Exposing body parts: lewd or indecent • Falsely activating fire alarm • Fire related: Possessing items that could be used to set or cause a fire or produce large amounts of smoke • Harassment or intimidation, including Title IX Sexual Harassment • Inciting/causing a substantial disturbance to the operation of school or the safety of staff and/or students • Leaving school grounds without permission • Physical contact of a sexual nature: Patting body parts, pinching, tugging clothing • Physical sexual aggression and/or forcing another to engage in sexual activity • Shoving, pushing, striking a student with no visible injury • Stealing money or property: Without or using physical force or using weapons • Throwing an object that has the potential to cause a disturbance, injury, or property damage • Tobacco: Possessing/using tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, vaping equipment • Trespassing • Weapon: Possessing or selling any weapon (not including firearms) 	<p>Level 1: Classroom supports, interventions, or minor consequences</p> <p>Level 2: Minor consequences up to suspension for a maximum of three days</p> <p>Level 3: Suspension between four and five days</p> <p>Level 4: Suspension between six and 10 days</p> <p>Level 5A: Suspension for more than 10 consecutive days, but less than 365 consecutive days (SMAPD hearing required)</p> <p>Level 5B: Recommendation for expulsion (SMAPD hearing required)</p>	<p>TIER II TIER III</p>
<p>CATEGORY E</p> <p>BEHAVIORS THAT ENDANGER SELF OR OTHERS (BESO)</p> <p>(These behaviors that endanger the health, safety, and welfare of either the student or others in the school community include, but are not limited to, the following.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assault: Intending to cause physical injury to another person • Assault and Battery: Causing physical injury to another person • Bomb threat: Making a bomb threat • Drugs: Possession/being under the influence/using/distributing (controlled substances, illegal drugs, synthetic hallucinogens, or unauthorized prescription medications) • Fighting/rioting: Use of physical violence between students or another person with no injury • Fire: Attempting to set, aiding in setting, or setting a fire • Gang-Related: Engaging in threatening or dangerous behavior • Hazing • Physical sexual aggression and/or forcing another to engage in sexual activity • Possession, distribution or use of weapons or lookalikes • Striking Staff: The use of force against a staff member when no injury is caused • Threatening or instigating violence, injury, or harm to another student or staff member, to include behaviors that intentionally endanger the health, safety, and welfare of others • Weapon: Possession of a firearm or destructive device • Weapon: Using any weapon to threaten or attempt to injure school personnel, students, or others 	<p>Level 1: Classroom supports, interventions, or minor consequences</p> <p>Level 2: Minor consequences up to suspension for a maximum of three days</p> <p>Level 3: Suspension between four and five days</p> <p>Level 4: Suspension between six and 10 days</p> <p>Level 5A: Suspension for more than 10 consecutive days, but less than 365 consecutive days (SMAPD hearing required)</p> <p>Level 5B: Recommendation for expulsion (SMAPD hearing required)</p>	<p>TIER III</p>

Behavior Category	Behavior Description	Possible Administrative Response (Administrative responses may vary in level)	Possible Tiers of Response
<p>CATEGORY F</p> <p>PERSISTENTLY DANGEROUS BEHAVIORS (PDB)</p> <p>(These behaviors are indicators that the student is in need of interventions and supports include, but are not limited to, the following.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homicide with a firearm or other weapon includes any death resulting from causes other than natural, accidental, or suicide • Sexual assault offenses are defined as sexual penetration without consent and includes statutory rape and carnal knowledge of a minor • Use of bomb includes any explosive device • Assault with a firearm or other weapon includes the intentional causing of bodily harm to an individual • Malicious wounding without a weapon includes intentionally causing another person bodily injury, with the intent to maim, disfigure, disable, or kill • Aggravated sexual battery includes sexual battery and abuse against a person less than fifteen years of age • Actual and attempted robbery • Kidnapping/abduction • Illegal possession of a handgun, rifle/shotgun, projectile weapon, bomb, or other firearms • Illegal possession of controlled drugs and substances with the intent to distribute or sell 	<p>Level 5A: Suspension for more than 10 consecutive days, but less than 365 consecutive days (SMAPD hearing required)</p> <p>Level 5B: Recommendation for expulsion (SMAPD hearing required)</p>	<p>TIER III</p>

Examples of Tiered Responses to Student Behavior

TIER I

EXAMPLES OF SCHOOL/CLASSROOM INTERVENTIONS AND RESPONSES

Interventions:

- Class meeting
- Confiscation of disruptive communication and entertainment devices
- Focus on prevention of tobacco and vaping use
- Re-teaching or modeling of desired behavior
- Recognize/Reward appropriate behavior
- Administrator/Student conference and/or Administrator/Student/Teacher conference
- Written reflection or letter of apology
- Peer mediation or conflict resolution
- Behavior progress chart
- Community service (appropriate to correct the behavior)
- Administrator/Teacher/Parent/Guardian conference

Disciplinary Responses:

- Restitution
- Seat change
- Loss of school privileges
- Confiscation by the administration
- Detention (before school, at lunch, after school)
- In-school suspension (one-two days) with behavioral instruction and academic support

TIER II

EXAMPLES OF ADMINISTRATIVE INTERVENTIONS AND RESPONSES

Interventions:

- Student conference
- Administrator/Teacher/Counselor/Student conference (includes re-teaching of expected behavior)
- Administrator/Teacher/Parent/Guardian conference
- Check-In/Check-Out
- Mediation or conflict resolution
- Referral to support services (e.g., School Counselor, Behavior Interventionist, Mentor Program, and Problem Solving Team (ex. VTSS), Substance Use and Intervention Program)
- Referral to Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Team
- Community service (appropriate to correct the behavior)

- Referral for community-based services

Disciplinary Responses:

- Schedule change
- Detention (before school, at lunch, or after school)
- Saturday school
- Restitution
- Confiscation
- Temporary loss of privileges
- In-school suspension with behavioral interventions and/or restorative practices (one-three days)

TIER III

EXAMPLES OF EXTENDED SUSPENSION AND RESPONSES

- Conduct Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plan
- Further disciplinary action (long-term suspension or a recommendation for expulsion) by SMAPD
- Non-participation in school-sponsored activities
- Nontraditional education placement
- No-trespassing order
- Out-of-school suspension
- Police/court action
- Referral to appropriate community-based agency, mental health service, substance abuse counseling services, etc.
- Restitution

These interventions and responses aim to teach appropriate and alternative behavior, so students can learn and demonstrate safe and respectful behavior. The examples above are not all-inclusive nor required to be exhausted. In every case, the staff should consider revisions to plans supporting students with special needs (response to intervention, child study, IEP, or 504).

School Conference

Whenever students or parents feel that the best interests of the individual or of the group have been disregarded, a conference with the teacher, sponsor, coach, counselor, or other school personnel should be arranged. If a routine agreement cannot be reached among student(s) and school personnel, then the student has the right to:

- Arrange a meeting with the principal or the designated assistant principal to discuss such conditions or decisions judged by the student(s) to be detrimental.
- Request a conference of the parent, student, and principal if not satisfied with initial meetings.
- See “Appeal Procedures” as summarized on pages 30-34 and set forth in Regulation 731-1, “Appeal of Student Matters.”

Teacher Removal of Students from Class

Teachers may remove disruptive students from class in accordance with School Board Policy 702, “Teacher Removal of Students from Class,” as stated below.

The Virginia Code, § 22.1-276.2, provides for the initial authority of a teacher to remove a student from class for disruptive behavior. Further, the Virginia Code defines disruptive behavior as a “violation of school board regulations governing student conduct that interrupts or obstructs the learning environment.”

Legal Notices to Students and Parents

Students and parents are also responsible for reading and becoming familiar with the following policies and regulations placing them on notice of Prince William County Public Schools disciplinary programs and procedures:

- Policy 681 and Regulation 681-1, “Nontraditional Education Programs”
- Policy 702, “Teacher Removal of Students from Class”
- Policy 715, “Notice of Student’s School Status Required as Condition of Enrollment,” and Regulation 715-5, “Disclosure of Child’s Disciplinary and Criminal History Prior to Enrollment”
- Policy 730, “Student Conduct and Responsibilities,” and Regulation 730-1, “Conduct”

- Policy 731 and Regulation 731-1, “Appeal of Student Matters”
- Policy 735 and Regulation 735-1, “Prohibited Substances”
- Policy 743 and Regulation 743-1, “Student Discipline”
- Policy 744 and Regulation 744-1, “Short-Term Suspension of Students”
- Policy 745, “Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion of Students, Readmissions, and Exclusion/Admission,” Regulation 745-1, “Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion of Students,” Regulation 745-4, “School Board Disciplinary Committee Procedures for Student Expulsion Appeal Hearings,” Regulation 745-5, “Readmissions and Exclusions/Admissions,” and Regulation 745-6, “Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion Appeals to the School Board”
- Policy 747 and Regulation 747-1, “Student Management and Alternative Programs Department (SMAPD)”
- Policy 775 and Regulation 775-1, “Weapons and Other Prohibited Objects”

Suspension Procedures

The rules governing out-of-school suspension are summarized in this section. A principal or assistant principal may suspend a student from school for misconduct which includes, but is not limited to, violations of the Code of Behavior. Please refer to Regulation 744-1, “Short-Term Suspension of Students,” and Regulation 745-1, “Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion of Students,” for the rules governing short- and long-term suspensions. The suspension of students receiving special education services shall be in accordance with Regulation 745-2, “Discipline of Students with Disabilities.” Whenever a suspension is imposed, the principal/designee will make all reasonable efforts to contact the parent(s) to advise them of the impending suspension and to make appropriate arrangements for the student to be returned to the student’s home.

Except as provided in Virginia Code § 22.1-277.07 or § 22.1-277.08, no student in preschool through grade three shall be suspended for more than three school days or expelled from attendance at school, unless (i) the offense involves physical harm or credible threat of physical harm to others or (ii) the School Board or the Superintendent or designee finds that aggravating circumstances exist, as determined by the appropriate level associate superintendent (six to 10 days) or the Student Management and Alternative Programs Department (over 10 school days), acting as the Superintendent’s designees. A student in preschool through grade three may be suspended or expelled from school upon the School Division’s receipt of a report pursuant to Virginia Code § 16.1-305.1 of an adjudication of delinquency or a conviction for an offense listed in subsection G of Virginia Code § 16.1-260.

It is the responsibility of the student to obtain and complete all assignments missed during the period of suspension. These assignments must be completed within a time frame established by the school. However, the principal has the latitude to provide other assignments or make-up options which would be more effective in changing the behavior of given students. Students who are suspended from school are prohibited from school property (including school buses) and school-related activities for the duration of their suspension and may be arrested for trespassing. Unless the student has written permission from school officials to be on school property, a school bus, or at a school-sponsored event, students whose disciplinary cases are pending a long-term suspension or expulsion decision (with the exception of disciplinary hearings) are prohibited from school property, school buses, and school-sponsored activities. Students who are suspended from school shall also be suspended from participation in all school activities (teams, clubs, and all other school-sponsored activities) including practice. In cases where the parent or adult student notifies the principal at the time of the suspension that there will be an appeal, the student shall be allowed to attend school until the case is heard and a final decision has been rendered, unless the principal considers that the presence of the student creates a present and continuing threat to the health, safety, and/or welfare of persons or property in the school or may pose a disruption to the educational process.

Long-Term Suspension - In the event of a serious breach of conduct which may merit a suspension greater than 10 school days but less than 45 school days, the principal shall suspend the student for five school days and provide the student and the student’s parent(s) with written notice of the proposed action and the reasons, therefore. A long-term suspension may extend beyond a 45-school-day period but shall not exceed 364 calendar days if (i) the offense is one described in § 22.1-277.07 or § 22.1-277.08 of the Virginia Code or involves serious bodily injury; or (ii) the School Board or Superintendent or designee finds that aggravating circumstances exist as defined by the Virginia Department of Education. A hearing will be conducted by the Student Management and Alternative Programs Department pursuant to those procedures explained in Regulation 745-1, “Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion of Students,” and Regulation 747-1, “Student Management and Alternative Programs Department (SMAPD).” Any further appeal shall be in accordance with Regulation 731-1, “Appeal of Student Matters,” Regulation 745-6, “Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion Appeals to the School Board,” and Regulation 745-2, “Discipline of Students with Disabilities.”

Short-Term Suspension - In the event that the principal or principal’s designee intends to suspend a student for 10 school days or less, the student shall be given oral or written notice of the charges against them, and, if the student denies them, the student shall be given an explanation of the facts known to school personnel and an opportunity to present the student’s version of the events. The procedures regarding the short-term suspension of a student are outlined in Regulation 744-1, “Short-Term Suspension of Students.”

Expulsion Procedures

The rules governing expulsion, readmission, and exclusion are summarized in this section. Please refer to Regulation 745-1, “Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion of Students,” Regulation 745-5, “Readmissions and Exclusions/Admissions,” Regulation 745-6, “Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion Appeals to the School Board,” and Regulation 747-1, “Student Management and Alternative Programs Department (SMAPD),” for all information pertaining to this subject. Please refer to Regulation 745-2, “Discipline of Students with Disabilities,” for information regarding the expulsion of students receiving special education services.

The School Board may expel students for sufficient cause. A student may be denied the right to attend any school in Prince William County when:

- the student is a potential or continuing danger to the health, welfare, or safety of others; or
- the student’s conduct is disruptive to the educational mission or the orderly operation of the school; or
- the student has engaged in conduct that violates the School Division’s policies and regulations or the Code of Behavior, or in other conduct which threatens the safety or security of the school or is otherwise connected to the school; or
- the student has obtained an accumulation of offenses for which expulsion is merited (general education students only); or
- other circumstances demonstrate that the expulsion of the student is in the best interest of the local school or the School Division.

Except as provided in Virginia Code § 22.1-277.07 or § 22.1-277.08, no student in preschool through grade three shall be expelled from attendance at school, unless (i) the offense involves physical harm or credible threat of physical harm to others or (ii) the School Board or the Superintendent or designee finds that aggravating circumstances exist, as defined by the Virginia Department of Education. A student in preschool through grade three may be suspended or expelled from school upon the School Division’s receipt of a report pursuant to Virginia Code § 16.1-305.1 of an adjudication of delinquency or a conviction for an offense listed in subsection G of Virginia Code § 16.1-260.

Any student conduct occurring on or off school property which creates a threat to the safety or security of students or staff, which results in material disruption to the operation of the school, which is planned in school or at school activities, which occurs when the student is under the school’s authority in loco parentis, or is otherwise connected to the school, may be grounds for expulsion.

Students may be recommended for expulsion as a result of the following:

- the possession, use, or distribution of prohibited substances as set forth in Regulation 735-1, “Prohibited Substances;”
- the possession of weapons, as set forth in Regulation 775-1, “Weapons and Other Prohibited Objects;”
- physical assaults on a school staff member, as set forth in Regulation 745-1, “Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion of Students;” and
- group assaults, as set forth in Regulation 745-1, “Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion of Students.”

Appeal Procedures

One of the goals of site-based management is to resolve issues at the school level. The information in this section summarizes the appeal procedures. Regulation 731-1, “Appeal of Student Matters,” provides details about this subject.

Summary of Procedures and Timelines for Appeals

Academic Appeals - Grade placement; class assignment; grades and/or assignments, exams and exam grades; promotion/retention; honor rolls; and placement in site-specific programs.

- First Appeal – Written appeal to the principal (or a committee designated by the principal to make recommendations) within three school days of notification of action, stating reason for appeal and the relief being sought. Principal or committee shall respond in writing within five school days or as soon as otherwise practicable.
- Final Appeal – Written appeal to appropriate level associate superintendent or designee within three business days of notification of the principal’s decision. Level associate superintendent shall respond in writing within five business days or as soon as otherwise practicable.

Middle and High School Music Performance Participation and Academic/Grade-Related Issues Appeals:

- The student or parent shall appeal directly to the principal by providing a written statement describing the individual circumstances.
- The principal shall review the appeal and submit the parent's request and the principal's recommendation within two school days after receipt of the appeal. If the appeal is related to student participation in middle and high school music performances, the principal shall forward the request and recommendation to the supervisor of the arts. When the appeal is related to middle and high school music performances, the principal shall be responsible for notifying the appropriate level associate superintendent. If the appeal is related to academic/grade-related issues, the principal shall forward the request and recommendation to the appropriate level associate superintendent.
- The decisions rendered by the level associate superintendent and the supervisor of the arts shall be final.

Interscholastic Activities and Competition Appeals:

- The student or parent may appeal directly to the school principal by providing a written statement describing the individual circumstances.
- The school principal shall review the appeal and submit a request or recommendation within two school days after receipt of the appeal to the supervisor of student activities. The principal is also responsible for advising the appropriate level associate superintendent of this action.
- The decision rendered by the supervisor of student activities shall be final.

Co-curricular and Extra-curricular Programs: Eligibility Appeals - Student Maintains Virginia High School League and District Eligibility but Fails to Achieve County Standards of Eligibility:

- The student or parent may appeal directly to the school principal by providing a written statement describing the circumstances that resulted in failure to achieve the standard. The appeal must be made within three school days following the issuance of report cards.
- The school principal shall review the appeal and submit all appeal requests, accompanied by the principal's recommendation, within three school days after receipt of the appeal to the supervisor of student activities. The decision rendered by the supervisor of student activities shall be final.

Graduation Appeals - The procedure and timeline must be expedient due to the time sensitive nature of these appeals.

- First Appeal – Informal conference with principal.
- Final Appeal – Written appeal to appropriate level associate superintendent or designee.

Transfer Appeals - The procedure and timeline must be in accordance with the provisions set forth in Regulation 721-1, "Student Transfers - Kindergarten/Elementary/Middle School," and Regulation 721-2, "Student Transfers - High School."**Kindergarten/Elementary/Middle School Appeals:**

- Final Appeal – Appeals may be submitted in writing to the supervisor of secondary counseling and student support services (middle school) or the supervisor of elementary counseling and related services (kindergarten/elementary school) by June 1 of the school year in which the transfer was denied by the requested school. The appropriate supervisor will consult with the director of the Student Services Department and will communicate the final appeal decision to the parent/guardian by June 30.

High School Appeals:

- Final Appeal – Appeals may be submitted to the supervisor of secondary counseling and related services by June 1 of the school year in which the transfer was denied by the requested school. The supervisor of secondary counseling and related services will consult with the director of the Student Services Department and the final appeal decision will be communicated to the parent by June 30.

Appeal of Decision Involving a Complaint of Discrimination or Harassment:

- A student who has filed a Formal Complaint of Title IX Sexual Harassment under Regulation 738-1, "Resolution of Allegations Against Students of Sexual Misconduct," shall follow the appeal procedures and timelines set forth in that regulation.
- A student who has filed a Complaint of Discrimination or Discriminatory Harassment under Regulation 738-3, "Resolution of Allegations Against Students of Discrimination or Harassment," shall follow the appeal procedures and timelines set forth in that regulation.

Appeal of Placement/Reassignment for Certain School Reportable Offenses to a Nontraditional Education Program (excluding Special Education)

Referral by base school to a nontraditional education program:

- First Appeal – Within three school days of receipt of the written decision of the principal or designee, the student may submit to SMAPD a written request for a hearing before a SMAPD hearing officer.
- Final Appeal – Written appeal to the School Board to be submitted through the SMAPD office within 10 calendar days of the date of the SMAPD decision letter. The School Board shall review the petition and the record of the SMAPD hearing as soon as practicable. The School Board’s decision shall be final.

Parent appeal of denial of placement in nontraditional education program:

- Appeal – Written request for appeal to be submitted to the appropriate level associate superintendent within three school days of receipt of the denial decision. The decision of the level associate superintendent shall be final.

Reassignment/placement by SMAPD for certain criminal or other offenses under Virginia Code §§ 22.1-209.1:2 or 22.1:277.2:1:

- First Appeal – Hearing with SMAPD.
- Final Appeal – If the student, parent, or guardian is not in agreement with the outcome of the SMAPD hearing, the student, parent, or guardian may appeal the SMAPD decision to the School Board. Such appeal must be submitted through the SMAPD office within 10 calendar days of the date of the SMAPD decision letter. The School Board shall review the petition and the record of the SMAPD hearing as soon as practicable. The School Board’s decision shall be final.

Placement by SMAPD upon return to school from long-term suspension or expulsion:

- First Appeal – Written appeal to the School Board Disciplinary Committee.
- Final Appeal – If a student is recommended for long-term suspension or expulsion, the hearing and appeal procedures set forth in Regulation 745-1, “Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion of Students,” and Regulation 745-6, “Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion Appeals to the School Board,” shall apply. During or following a long-term suspension or expulsion, a student may be required to attend a nontraditional education program.

Short-Term Suspension Appeals: Refer to Regulation 744-1, “Short-Term Suspension of Students.”

Appeal of short-term suspensions (one to five school days):

- Students whose short-term suspension is under appeal may attend school during the pendency of the appeal unless they pose a safety risk or present a threat of ongoing disruption.
- School level appeal: The student and/or parent(s) shall submit a written appeal to the principal within three school days of notice of the suspension. The parent(s) shall be notified in writing of the status of the principal’s decision within five school days of having received the written appeal.
- Level associate superintendent appeal: If the principal’s decision is appealed, a written request appealing the decision must be received by the appropriate level associate superintendent within three business days of the parent(s) having been notified of the principal’s decision. The appeal must include the student’s account of the incident and the reason(s) for believing the suspension is unjustified. Written notification of the decision of the level associate superintendent shall be provided in writing to the parent(s) within five business days of receipt of the written appeal of the principal’s decision. The decision of the level associate superintendent is final.

Appeal of short-term suspensions (six to 10 school days):

- Any decision by a principal (or designee) to impose a suspension of six to 10 school days is subject to an automatic appeal to the appropriate level associate superintendent and requires no action by the parent(s). The level associate superintendent will conduct a review of the action of the principal (or designee) and of the record of the student’s behavior and shall consult with the principal (or designee) following the principal’s informal conference prior to making a decision on the appeal.

Long-Term Suspension Appeals: Refer to Regulation 745-6, “Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion Appeals to the School Board.”

- The parent(s)/guardian(s) or student may file a written appeal to a three-member School Board Disciplinary Committee (SBDC) of the decision of the SMAPD hearing officer to suspend a student for more than 10 days, and/or decision to reassign the student to an alternative education placement. SMAPD’s decision regarding any other placement or the educational services to be provided to students during their suspension is final and may not be appealed. An appeal to the SBDC of SMAPD’s decision must be received by SMAPD, in writing, within 10 calendar days of the date of the SMAPD decision letter. The SBDC shall review the written appeal of the SMAPD hearing officer’s decision in closed session and shall decide the appeal within 30 calendar days of the filing of the request for appeal. Neither school staff, SMAPD staff, the student, the parent(s), or any representative of the student or parent(s) shall be present during the closed session of the SBDC. The SBDC shall consider only the evidence presented during the SMAPD hearing, with the exception of the letter of appeal, which shall be provided to the SBDC. In the event that the letter of appeal raises issues or facts not raised in the

SMAPD hearing, the SMAPD hearing officer may submit a letter or exhibits addressing only those new issues or facts, a copy of which shall be provided to the parent(s)/student. The SBDC has the authority to request further information from SMAPD staff regarding procedural issues only and/or the availability or suitability of alternative placement or educational services. No other documentation or evidence shall be considered by the SBDC. If the SBDC upholds the long-term suspension of a student with disabilities, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team shall convene to determine the continuation of appropriate educational services.

- Upon appeal, the SBDC may uphold, deny, or amend the decision of the SMAPD hearing officer, or may determine that other disciplinary action is merited, including expulsion. The SBDC's decision shall be final unless the decision is not unanimous, in which case the student may, within seven business days of the SBDC's decision, notify SMAPD in writing that the student intends to appeal the SBDC's decision to the full School Board, which shall review the appeal based solely on the administrative record presented to the SBDC and shall render a decision within 30 calendar days of receipt of the appeal.
- In the event that the SBDC determines that expulsion may be merited, the student shall be notified by SMAPD in writing of the right to request a due process hearing before a SBDC in accordance with the procedures for expulsion set forth in Regulation 745-6, "Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion Appeals to the School Board." In the event that the student does not request such a hearing, or a hearing is requested, and the student fails to appear, the SBDC shall render a decision based upon the written record.

Expulsion Appeals: Refer to Regulation 745-6, "Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion Appeals to the School Board."

If a student is recommended for expulsion by SMAPD, the parent(s) and student may appeal the disciplinary recommendation of the SMAPD hearing officer to a SBDC. Any decision by SMAPD to place the student in an alternative education program upon readmission may also be appealed. However, any other placement decision by SMAPD is final and may not be appealed. A written request for a hearing before a SBDC must be received by SMAPD within 10 calendar days of the date of the decision letter.

- First Appeal – Hearing before the SBDC.
- Final Appeal – Written appeal to the School Board (only if the decision of the SBDC is not unanimous).

Readmissions - The procedures, timeline, and appeal process for the readmission to school of students who have previously been expelled from Prince William County Public Schools are set forth in Regulation 745-5, "Readmissions and Exclusions/Admissions." For those cases that are appealed, the School Board shall conduct a review of the record in closed session and vote on the readmission decision in open session. Only those documents submitted to SMAPD for consideration for readmission shall be considered by the School Board. No additional documents, other than the letter of appeal, shall be submitted for consideration. The student and parent(s) shall be notified in writing of the School Board's decision.

Exclusions from School - The procedures and appeal process for students who have previously been expelled or suspended from attendance at school by another school division or private school and are requesting admission to Prince William County Public Schools are set forth in Regulation 745-5, "Readmissions and Exclusions/Admissions." For those cases that are appealed, the School Board shall meet in closed session to conduct a review of the documentation considered in the SMAPD admission hearing and the parent's letter of appeal and shall then vote on the exclusion recommendation in open session. The student and parent(s) shall be notified in writing within 30 days of the School Board's decision in the case of an expulsion or withdrawal of admission, and within 15 days in the case of a suspension of more than 30 days. The School Board may require an excluded student to attend a nontraditional education program provided by the School Board for the term of any exclusion from a base school.

Readmission to Traditional School for Non-Elective Placements

SMAPD Placements

As specified in Regulation 681-1, "Nontraditional Education Programs," a SMAPD Review Committee shall meet to review the disciplinary placement of students. The decision of the SMAPD Review Committee shall be final.

Base School Referrals

1. Independence Nontraditional School students – The principal of Independence Nontraditional School, or designee, recommends against a student's return to a traditional school setting:
 - First Appeal – Written appeal to the SMAPD Review Committee.
 - Final Appeal – Written appeal to the associate superintendent for student and professional learning.
2. Students in other alternative education programs – The principal/director of any other alternative education program recommends against a student's return to a traditional school setting:
 - First Appeal – Written appeal to the SMAPD Review Committee.
 - Final Appeal – Written appeal to the associate superintendent for special education and student services.

Authority to Modify Disciplinary Actions - At each level of the procedure for all disciplinary appeals, the appeal may be granted or denied, and the related consequences (corrective measures) may be increased, decreased, or allowed to remain the same. If in the appeal of a long-term suspension the School Board determines that expulsion may be appropriate, the student shall be notified by SMAPD of the right to request a due process hearing before a committee of the School Board. In the event that the student does not request such a hearing, or a hearing is requested, and the student fails to appear, a committee of the School Board will render a decision based upon the written record. In the event that the decision of the School Board committee is not unanimous, the student may submit a written appeal to the full School Board.

Discrimination and Harassment

Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) is committed to providing learning and working environments that are free from all forms of discrimination and harassment. Discrimination against, and harassment of, students or staff is unlawful conduct strictly prohibited by the Code of Behavior (COB). PWCS encourages students, parents, employees, and community members to work together to prevent and remedy all forms of discrimination and harassment.

Regulations 738-1, “Resolution of Allegations Against Students of Sexual Misconduct,” and 738-3, “Resolution of Allegations Against Students of Discrimination or Harassment,” provide detailed information regarding the procedures by which PWCS will respond to an allegation that a student engaged in discrimination or harassment. The following is a summary of information from those regulations; in the event of any conflict between this information and Regulations 738-1 and 738-3, the regulations shall control.

Sexual Misconduct and Title IX Sexual Harassment

Sexual misconduct is any misconduct of a sexual nature or mistreatment that is based on sex or sex stereotyping. Sexual misconduct may be verbal, nonverbal, electronic, or physical and may target a student or a staff member regardless of the individual’s sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Sexual misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- making sexual advances, including requesting sexual favors, leering, or engaging in unwelcome and repeated flirting;
- engaging in sex-based verbal abuse, including using slurs or epithets or making graphic and/or degrading descriptions about an individual’s body;
- making, sharing, and/or displaying sex-based jokes, gestures, objects, or images (including drawings, photographs, or video);
- spreading sex-based rumors;
- making sex-based threats or threats of a sexual nature;
- impeding or blocking an individual’s movement in a sexually intimidating manner; or
- sexually assaulting or improperly touching another individual.

All sexual misconduct that occurs on school property, at a school-sponsored activity, or that prevents a student from getting to or from school safely violates the COB and will be investigated and responded to by school officials.

Some forms of sexual misconduct constitute Title IX Sexual Harassment, which is prohibited by law. Title IX Sexual Harassment is misconduct on the basis of sex that meets one of the following conditions:

- a PWCS employee provides or offers to provide a PWCS aid, benefit, or service to an individual in exchange for the individual’s participation in sexual conduct;
- a student or staff member is subjected to unwelcome conduct that is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that the individual is denied equal access to a PWCS educational program or activity; or
- dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking as defined by the U.S. Code and Regulation 738-1.

Other Discrimination and Discriminatory Harassment

All mistreatment or bullying behavior including cyberbullying that occurs on school property, at a school-sponsored activity, or that prevents a student from getting to or from school safely violates the COB and will be investigated and responded to by school officials. However, not all mistreatment or bullying behavior constitutes discrimination or discriminatory harassment.

Discrimination occurs when one or more individuals are treated differently, or not given fair consideration or the same opportunity as others because of their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by law.

Harassment is a form of discrimination; it is a course of unwanted conduct that targets one or more individuals on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, marital status, veteran status, disability, genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by law. Discriminatory harassment demeans, intimidates, or harms an individual or group in such a way as to cause anxiety or fear for safety.

Discriminatory harassment:

- Discriminatory harassment demeans, intimidates, or harms an individual or group, causing anxiety or fear; creates an intimidating, hostile, and/or offensive environment; substantially or unreasonably interferes with a student’s education; or otherwise, limits an individual’s ability to participate in or benefit from a PWCS educational program.
- Discriminatory harassment may target an individual even when the individual does not actually possess any characteristic that is the basis for the harassment (so long as the harassment is based on the belief that the target possesses such characteristic).

- Discriminatory harassment may be expressed in various ways, including through physical actions or through verbal, nonverbal, electronic, or written communications. Discriminatory harassment may take various forms, including but not limited to:
 - offensive comments, name-calling, gestures, “jokes,” or rumors;
 - demeaning drawings, cartoons, or graffiti; or
 - acts of aggression toward individuals or their property, including threats or physical assaults.

Reporting Suspected Discrimination or Harassment

Students who believe that they have been discriminated against or harassed are encouraged to report the matter to the school principal or to the Equity and Student Relations Department at TitleIXEquity@pwcs.edu or at 571-374-6839. The initial report may be verbal or in writing; a reporting form is available on the PWCS Equity and Student Relations Department webpage; its use is encouraged, although not necessary.

Preventing Discrimination and Harassment

School officials will act to stop and prevent discrimination and harassment. Students can help stop and prevent discrimination and harassment by:

- speaking up and letting the students engaging in the misconduct know that their behavior is hurtful and that they should stop;
- asking for help from a parent, teacher, counselor, school administrator, or other trusted adult; and
- reporting the misconduct to a school administrator, another trusted adult at school, or the Equity and Student Relations Department.

Relevant PWCS Policies and Regulations

- Policy 738, “Nondiscrimination and Harassment of Students”
- Regulation 738-1, “Complaint Procedures for Student Claims of Discrimination or Harassment”
- Regulation 738-2, “Title IX – Access to Education Programs and Activities”
- Regulation 738-3, “Harassment of Students”
- Regulation 738-4, “Non-Discrimination of Students on the Basis of Disability”

Sources of Help or Additional Information

Any student or parent who has questions or concerns about discrimination or harassment involving one or more students is encouraged to contact the principal, assistant principal, school counselor, or the Equity and Student Relations Department at:

Telephone: 571-374-6839
 FAX: 571-503-2230
 Email: TitleIXEquity@pwcs.edu

Mailing address:
 Equity and Student Relations Department
 Prince William County Public Schools
 P. O. Box 389
 Manassas, Virginia, 20108

Bullying

Bullying of Students is Not Permitted

Each school is committed to creating an environment in which students are free from bullying. Students are strongly encouraged to report incidents to the school administration. The school administrator will take appropriate steps to respond quickly and decisively to student reports of bullying. Students may use the form on page 39 to report incidents of bullying. The “Complaint of Bullying” form is also located in the counseling department or the school’s main office.

Q: What is bullying?

A: Bullying is any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. Bullying includes cyberbullying. Bullying does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict.

Q: What is cyberbullying?

A: Cyberbullying is a form of bullying which involves sending, receiving, or displaying electronic messages and/or images. Cyberbullying can include any threats by one student toward another, typically through emails, texts, or on websites (e.g., blogs, social networking sites). Electronic communications that support deliberate, hostile, hurtful messages intended to harm others are also examples of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying can include such things as sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images; posting sensitive, private information about another person; pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad; and using defamatory online personal polling websites.

Cyberbullying using the Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) internet, PWCS computers, or other wireless communication devices in schools, on school property, or at school-related activities will not be tolerated. Cyberbullying which occurs off school grounds and/or does not involve the use of the PWCS internet or computers may also result in disciplinary action if it causes, or is likely to cause, a material disruption to the operation of the school or the School Division, threatens the safety or mental/physical well-being of students or staff, or threatens the safety of school buildings or school property.

Q: What behaviors are considered to be bullying behaviors?

A: Some examples of bullying behaviors may include purposely excluding others, taunts, threats, gestures, insults, gossip, humiliation, teasing, cyberbullying, physical aggression, stealing or destroying property, or cursing or laughing at someone. Bullying takes many forms. Examples: Sometimes, bullying is people making other people feel left out; other times, bullying may involve hitting, teasing, or threatening to hurt someone. Stealing or damaging someone’s lunch or books could be bullying, too; so is laughing at people because they wear glasses or different kinds of clothes, or because they aren’t good at sports. Using the internet or computers to harm people is another form of bullying.

Q: What if the bully is threatening and intimidating a student? What can school officials do to help keep the student safe?

A: Any student who is being threatened or intimidated (or who is aware that another student is being threatened or intimidated) is strongly encouraged to report the misconduct to a school administrator, counselor, or other trusted school staff member. The allegations will be promptly investigated and reported to the school’s Threat Assessment Team, which, among other things, will take appropriate measures to ensure the safety of students and of the school environment.

Q: How can I report bullying?

A: Any student can report bullying by talking to an administrator or trusted school staff member or by completing the Bullying Complaint Form. Any school staff member who receives a report of bullying must tell the school administration.

Q: What should I do if the bullying continues?

A: Report this to a school administrator or a trusted school staff member immediately. It is also important to tell your parent(s) that the bullying is continuing. Administrators will take disciplinary action if the student accused of bullying attempts to get back at the victim for reporting the bullying behavior.

Q: Are there immediate actions that I can take if I am bullied?

A: Yes. These actions include:

- telling the bully very firmly to stop; and
- talking with a staff member, counselor, administrator, or parent about the incident immediately.

Complaint of Bullying

The Prince William County Public Schools Code of Behavior (COB) defines bullying as any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. Bullying also includes cyberbullying, which involves the transmission, receipt, or display of electronic messages or images. Bullying does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict. The principal and staff of this school are committed to enforcement of the COB and will respond promptly and appropriately to complaints of bullying. Any student can file a complaint by talking to an administrator and/or completing this form and submitting it to an assistant principal or principal. Any staff member may also complete this form on behalf of a student or parent who reports bullying.

PLEASE PRINT

Name of Complainant: _____

School: _____

Name(s) of Person(s) accused of bullying: _____

Description of Complaint (use specific dates, times, witness names, etc., if possible):

Signature of Complainant: _____ Date: _____

NOTE: All complaints will be followed by an investigation. Those accused, as well as the parent(s) of students involved, will be informed of complaints, witnesses will be interviewed, and all information will remain confidential except for that which must be shared as part of the investigation.