

CONDUCT/DISCIPLINE

POLICY #5131

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

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

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

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

In developing the standards, policies and procedures to implement this policy, the Superintendent shall ensure that the Code of Student Conduct:

- A. Is based on parent, student and community involvement which represents, where possible, the composition of the School and Community;
- B. Is based on locally determined and accepted core ethical values;
- C. Is Board approved.

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The Superintendent shall develop regulations that:

- A. Require pupils to conform to reasonable standards of socially acceptable behavior; respect the person, property and rights of others; obey constituted authority and respond to those who hold that authority;
- B. Establish the degree of order necessary to the educational program in which pupils are engaged.

The Board will annually review and update the code of student conduct and this process shall include:

- A. Parent, student and community involvement which represents, where possible, the composition of the schools and community;
- B. Consideration of the findings of the annual reports of student conduct, suspensions and expulsions; and incidences reported under the Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System.

The Superintendent shall annually:

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

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

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

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

Substance Abuse

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

Weapons Offenses

Any pupil who is convicted or adjudicated delinquent for possession of a firearm or a crime while armed with a firearm or found knowingly in possession of a firearm on any school property or on a school bus or at a School-sponsored function shall be immediately removed from the School's regular education program for a period of not less than one calendar year. The Superintendent may modify this suspension on a case-by-case basis. Each pupil so removed shall be placed in an alternative educational program or on home instruction and shall be entitled to a hearing before the Board. The hearing shall take place no later than 30 days following the day the pupil is removed from the regular education program and shall be closed to the public.

The Superintendent shall be responsible for the removal of such students. The Superintendent shall also notify the appropriate law enforcement agency of a possible violation of the New Jersey Code of Criminal Justice.

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

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

Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying

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

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

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

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

“Electronic communication” means a communication that is transmitted by means of an electronic device, including but not limited to a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager, that takes place on School property, at any School-sponsored function or on a School bus.

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

The Superintendent shall develop appropriate procedures addressing:

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

The Superintendent shall take all necessary steps to publicize this policy, and shall inform pupils and staff that harassment, intimidation or bullying is prohibited on School property or any School-sponsored function. This information shall also be incorporated into the Student Handbook and Employee training programs.

Disabled

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

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

Staff shall comply with State and Federal Law and the Regulations of the New Jersey Administrative Code in dealing with discipline and/or suspension of all pupils with disabilities.

Implementation

The Superintendent shall ensure that the rules for this policy are applied consistently and uniformly, and that all disciplinary sanctions are carried out with necessary due process.

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

Conduct Away From School Grounds

School Authorities have the right to impose a consequence on a student for conduct away from School grounds, including on a School bus or at a School-sponsored function, that is consistent with the District Board of Education's Code of Student Conduct, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1.

1. This authority shall be exercised only when it is reasonably necessary for the student's physical or emotional safety, security and well-being or for reasons relating to the safety, security and well-being of other students, staff or School grounds, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:25-2 and 18A:37-2.
2. This authority shall be exercised only when the conduct which is the subject of the proposed consequence materially and substantially interferes with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the School.
3. The consequence pursuant to above, shall be handled in accordance with the District Board of Education approved Code of Student Conduct, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1, and as appropriate, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.2, 7.3 or 7.5.

LEGAL REFERENCES:

- N.J.S.A. 2C:12-1 Definition of assault
N.J.S.A. 2C:33-19 Paging devices, possession by students
N.J.S.A. 2C:39-5 Unlawful possession of weapons
N.J.S.A. 18A:6-1 Corporal punishment of pupils
N.J.S.A. 18A:11-1 General mandatory powers and duties
N.J.S.A. 18A:25-2 Authority over pupils
N.J.S.A. 18A:36-19a Newly enrolled students; records and identification
N.J.S.A. 18A:37-1 et seq. Discipline of Pupils
See particularly:
N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15
N.J.S.A. 18A:40A-1 et seq. Substance Abuse
N.J.S.A. 18A:54-20 Powers of board (county vocational schools)
N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2. Discipline/suspension/expulsions
N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1.1et seq. Programs to Support Student Development
See particularly:
N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1.4, -2.4, -4.1, -5.1, -6.1, -6.2, -7.1
N.J.A.C. 6A:32-12.1 Reporting requirements
N.J.A.C. 6A:32-12.2 School-level planning
P.L. 2007, c.129, amends N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15 and includes Electronic communication in the definition of public school “harassment, intimidation or bullying”
20 U.S.C.A. 1415(k) Individual with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997
Bethel School District No. 403, v. Fraser, 478 U.S. 675 (1986)
Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier 484 U.S. 260 (1988)
Honig v. Doe, 484 U.S. 305 (1988)

See also Commissioners’ Decisions indexed under “Pupils – Punishment of” in Index to N.J. School Law Decisions No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. 107-110, 20 U.S.C.A. 6301 et seq. L.W. v. Toms River Regional Schools Board of Education, N.J., No. A-11-05 (Feb. 22, 2007), 2007 N.J. LEXIS 184. the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that a school district may be held liable under the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD0, N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 to -49, when students harass another student because of his perceived sexual orientation. A district school will be liable for such harassment if it knew or should have known of the harassment but failed to take reasonable remedial actions.

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The matter was remanded to the Director of the Division of Civil Rights.

Manual for the Evaluation of Local School Districts
A Uniform State Memorandum of Agreement Between
Education and Law
Enforcement Officials (1999 Revisions)

FIRST READING: Board of Education Meeting: 11/20/08

SECOND READING & ADOPTION: Board of Education Meeting: 12/18/08