

## **STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

Promoting ethical and responsible student behavior is an essential component of the RSU 9 Board's educational mission.

The RSU 9 School Board (Board) is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful and orderly school environment in which students may receive and staff may deliver quality education without disruption or interference and in which students may develop as ethical, responsible, and involved citizens.

To achieve this goal, the Board has developed this Student Code of Conduct Policy (Code) with input from school administrators, staff, students, parents, and the community. Based on values identified as essential to ethical and responsible behavior, the Code articulates the Board's expectations for student conduct.

The Board believes that each member of the school community should take responsibility for their own behavior. To that end, the Board recognizes the need to define unacceptable student conduct, identify the possible consequences for unacceptable conduct and ensure that consequences are administered fairly, promptly, and appropriately.

The Student Code of Conduct Policy shall be distributed to students, parents, and staff through handbooks and/or other methods deemed appropriate by the Superintendent and building administrators.

### **Standards for Ethical and Responsible Behavior**

The Code is intended to support and encourage students to meet the following standards and expectations for ethical and responsible behavior:

- Respect
- Honesty
- Compassion
- Fairness
- Responsibility
- Courage

All students are expected to comply with the Code of Conduct and all related Board policies and school expectations. The Code applies to students:

- On school property
- On school transportation

- While in attendance at school or at any school-sponsored activity, or
- At any time or place that such conduct directly interferes with the operations, discipline, or general welfare of the school and school activities ~~involved in~~.

### **General Behavior Expectations**

The following expectations for student behavior are fundamental to the safe, orderly and respectful environment in our schools. They include but are not limited to each student ~~should~~:

1. Being courteous to fellow students, staff, and visitors.
2. Respecting the rights and privileges of other students and school staff.
3. Obeying all Board policies and school rules governing student conduct.
4. Following directions from school staff.
5. Cooperating with staff in maintaining school safety, order and discipline.
6. Attending school regularly.
7. Meeting school standards for grooming and dress.
8. Respecting the property of others, including school property and facilities.
9. Refraining from cheating or plagiarizing the work of others.
10. Refraining from disruptive behavior.

### **Expectations**

The following is a summary of RSU 9's expectations for student behavior. In many cases, the Board has adopted policies that address these expectations in greater detail. Students, parents, and others should refer to the policies and each school's student handbooks for more information about the expectations and consequences. In case of an inconsistency between the Code of Conduct, Board policies and/or school handbooks, the Board's policies will take precedence.

- A. Violence and Threats:** Students shall not engage in violent or threatening behavior. Prohibited behavior includes fighting, assault and/or battery, taking hostages, threats to commit violence against persons or property, or threats, intimidation, or harassment. Violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, as permitted by law.

**B. Weapons:** Students shall not possess or use weapons of any kind (examples include but are not limited to firearms, explosives, knives, or replicas). Students also shall not use any object, although not necessarily designed to be a weapon, to inflict bodily harm and/or to threaten, intimidate, coerce or harass another person (examples include but are not limited to bats, lighters, tools, and toy weapons). Firearms violations will result in expulsion in accordance with state and federal statutes; other weapons violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, as permitted by law.

**C. Bullying and Cyberbullying:** Bullying includes, but is not limited to, a written, oral or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof directed at a student or students that:

(a) Has, or a reasonable person would expect it to have, the effect of: (i) Physically harming a student or damaging a student's property; or (ii) placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or damage to the student's property;

(b) Interferes with the rights of a student by: (i) Creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment for the student; (ii) Interfering with the student's academic performance or ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or privileges provided by the school; or

(c) Is based on actual or perceived characteristics or association with persons with these actual or perceived characteristics specified in the policy, and has the effects described above.

Any student who engages in conduct that constitutes bullying and/or cyberbullying shall be subject to disciplinary consequences including suspension and expulsion, as permitted by law. A student's bullying behavior may also be addressed through other behavioral interventions.

**D. Hazing:** Hazing is prohibited. Maine law defines injurious hazing as "any action or situation, including harassing behavior that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health of any school personnel or a student enrolled in public school." No student shall plan, encourage, or engage in such activities in connection with any school program or activity, including extracurricular, co-curricular, and athletic activities. Students who engage in hazing activities are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion and/or other appropriate disciplinary measures, as permitted by law.

**E. Discrimination and Harassment/Sexual Harassment:** Students shall not discriminate against other students on the basis of race (including but not limited to traits associated with race involving hair texture, Afro hairstyles and protective hairstyles such as braids, twists and locks), color, sex, religion, ancestry, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability. Nor shall students harass one another on the basis of race (including but not limited to traits associated with race involving hair texture, Afro hairstyles and protective hairstyles such as braids, twists and locks), color, sex, religion, ancestry, or national origin, sexual orientation,

or disability. Sexual harassment is also prohibited. Harassment is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, as permitted by law.

**F. Drug and Alcohol Use:** Students shall not distribute, possess, use or be under the influence of any alcoholic beverage, drug, “bath salts” or look-alike substance as described in Board policy. Violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, as permitted by law and in keeping with JLCDA (Medical Marijuana in Schools).

**G. Tobacco Use:** Students shall not smoke, use, possess, sell or distribute any tobacco products. This prohibition also applies but is not limited to e-cigarettes and products and paraphernalia associated with “vaping.” Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, as permitted by law .

**H. Conduct on School Buses:** Students must comply with all school expectations while on RSU 9 transportation. Students who violate these expectations on RSU 9 transportation may have their riding privileges suspended or revoked, and may also be subject to additional disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, as permitted by law.

**I. Technology Devices/Internet Use:** Students may use RSU 9 technology devices, networks, and Internet services only for educational purposes. Students shall comply with all policies and expectations governing acceptable use. Unacceptable use may result in suspension or cancellation of computer privileges as well as additional disciplinary and/or legal action.

**J. Athletic/Extracurricular Activities:** Students must follow all RSU 9 Board policies and school expectations while participating in athletics and extracurricular activities or when representing RSU 9. Students who violate policies and expectations may be subject to suspension or removal from the team/activity as well as additional disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

**K. Care of School Property: Damage to School Property/Graffiti:** A student who damages/vandalizes/defaces school property will be held responsible for those actions. The student may be subject to disciplinary consequences including the possibility of restitution, suspension, and/or exclusion from school activities. Any damage to school property/graffiti may result in legal consequences.

**Vandalism:** A student who damages/vandalism/defaces school property will be held responsible for their actions. The student may be subject to disciplinary consequences including the possibility of restitution, suspension, expulsion, and/or exclusion from school activities, including, but not limited to the graduation ceremony. In addition, these actions may result in police involvement.

### **Discipline Policies**

Violations of the Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action. Consequences depend upon the seriousness of the violation and the student's prior disciplinary record. Consequences ~~will~~ can/may range from a verbal warning for minor violations up to and including expulsion for the most serious offenses. Behavior that also violates the law may be referred to law enforcement authorities.

The following limitations on expulsions and out-of-school suspensions for students in grade 5 or below:

1. Students in grade five or below may only be expelled for violations of the federal Gun-Free Schools Act, as provided in 20-A MRSA § 1001(9-A). The Superintendent may determine on a case-by-case basis, in writing that an expulsion is not required.
2. Students in grade five or below may not receive an out-of-school suspension except when a student a) has violated the federal Gun-Free Schools Act or b) presents an imminent danger of serious physical injury to the student or others, and it is determined that less restrictive interventions would be ineffective.
3. Any out-of-school suspension of a student in grade five or below can be no longer than three school days.
4. Recess may not be withheld as a consequence of violating this Code of Conduct by any student enrolled in grade five or below, except when recess is the only time when restorative interventions can occur.

### **Removal of Disruptive/Violent/Threatening Students**

1. Students who are disruptive, violent, or threatening death or bodily harm to themselves or others may be removed from classrooms, school buses, school activities, or other school property when necessary to maintain order and safety. The staff member who is responsible for the student removal should arrange to have the student escorted to the office, other designated location, or to be picked up by parents.
2. If a student does not comply with a staff member's direction to leave, the staff member will contact an administrator, or, designee, who shall respond appropriately.
3. Staff members should not use force or restraint, except only to the minimum extent necessary to protect any person from imminent physical harm. Staff members are not required to take action that puts them at risk of serious injury, but to request administrative assistance.
4. The responding administrator will take appropriate action. If the student fails to obey verbal directions, force or restraint may be used only to the minimum extent necessary to protect any person(s) from imminent physical harm or to address a disturbance.

Whenever practicable, law enforcement should be called to restrain or physically remove a non-compliant student. The administrator or designee may invoke the school unit's emergency management plan if appropriate.

### **Special Services**

1. **Referral.** RSU 9 has adopted policies and procedures for determining when a student shall be referred for special services.
  
2. **Review of Individual Educational Plan.** The school shall schedule a meeting to review the IEP of a student who has been removed from class when:
  - a. School officials and/or the parent believes the student may present a substantial likelihood of injury to themselves or others;
  - b. The class removals are sufficient to constitute a change in the student's special education program; or
  - c. School officials or the parents believe that the student's behavior may warrant a change in educational programming.

### **Referrals to Law Enforcement Authorities**

The superintendent and principals have the authority to seek the assistance of law enforcement authorities when there is a substantial threat to the safety of the schools, students, or staff. The superintendent/ building administrators may also inform law enforcement authorities when they have reason to suspect that a student may have violated a local, state, or federal statute. All serious offenses, as determined by the superintendent, must be reported to law enforcement authorities.

### **Dissemination of the Student Code of Conduct**

The Student Code of Conduct and summary of consequences for violation of the Code of Conduct shall be distributed to staff, students, and parents through student and district handbooks and/or other means selected by the superintendent and building administrators.

Legal Reference: 20-A M.R.S.A. §§ 254(11); 1001 (15)

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Standards for Ethical and Responsible Behavior in Maine Schools and Communities  
(Report of the Commission for Ethical and Responsible Behavior, 2/01)

Cross Reference:

AC: Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

ACAA/ACAA-R: Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students  
ACAD: Hazing

ADAA: School System Commitment to Standards for Ethical Responsible Behavior

ADC: Tobacco Use and Possession

EBCC: Bomb Threats

IHBAA: Referral and Use of General Education Interventions

IHBAC: Child Find

IJNDB: Student Computer and Internet Use and Internet Safety

JICIA: Weapons, Violence, and School Safety

JICH: Drug and Alcohol Use by Students

JICK: Bullying

JK: Student Discipline

JKD: Suspension of Students

JKE: Expulsion of Students

JKF: Disciplinary Removals of Students with Disabilities

JLCDA: Medical Marijuana in Schools

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