

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

It is essential for schools to maintain a safe and orderly environment that supports student learning and achievement. Effective discipline enables schools to discharge their primary responsibilities to educate students and promote citizenship and ethical behavior. All students are expected to conduct themselves with respect for others and in accordance with Board policies, school rules, and applicable state and federal laws. Disciplinary action may be taken against students who violate policies, rules, or laws, and/or whose conduct directly interferes with the operations, discipline, or general welfare of the school.

The Board expects the following principles to guide the development and implementation of school rules and disciplinary procedures:

- A. Discipline should emphasize positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior, as well as appropriate consequences for misbehavior. The focus should be on instructional and environmental supports that are designed to teach students prosocial alternatives to problem behaviors, using high rates of feedback with a focus on teaching expectations, preventing problems, and using logical consequences.
- B. Expectations for student behavior should be clear and communicated to school staff, students and parents.
- C. Positive and restorative interventions should be used to the extent feasible. Consequences for misbehavior should be in proportion to the offense, fair and consistently enforced. Administrators shall have the discretion to tailor discipline to the facts and circumstances of the particular case.
- D. Parents should be actively involved in helping to prevent and resolve disciplinary problems at school.

Any restraint or seclusion of students shall comply with applicable regulations and Board policy.

Recess may not be withheld as a consequence for a violation of the Student Code of Conduct for any student in grade five or below, except that when there is no alternative time available, recess time may be used for restorative interventions related to the student's conduct.

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Physical force and corporal punishment shall not be used as disciplinary methods.

Maine law provides that “a teacher or other person entrusted with the care or supervision of a person for special or limited purposes may not be held civilly liable for the use of a reasonable degree of force against the person who creates a disturbance if the teacher or other person reasonably believes it is necessary to a) control the disturbing behavior, or b) remove the person from the scene of the disturbance.”

Teachers are authorized to make and enforce rules for effective classroom management and to foster appropriate student behavior, subject to the direction and approval of the building principal/designee.

School-wide rules shall be developed by the building principal with appropriate input from school staff, students, and parents and are subject to approval by the superintendent. Principals shall provide for the suspension or other serious disciplinary action against students in accordance with Board policies, administrative procedures and Maine law.

Students with disabilities shall be disciplined in accordance with applicable federal and state law/regulations.

To reduce disciplinary problems and the potential for violence in the schools, the Superintendent may develop procedures for conflict resolution which may be accomplished through peer mediation, counseling, parent involvement, services of community agencies or other activities suitable to the school unit.

Legal Reference: 17-A MRSA § 106

20-A MRSA §§ 1001(15A); 4009

Cross Reference: AC - Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

ACAA – Student Harassment and Sexual Harassment

EBCA – Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

JIC – Student Code of Conduct

JICIA Weapons, Violence and School Safety

JKAA – Use of Physical Restraint and Seclusion

JKB - Student Detention

JKD - Suspension of Students

JKE - Expulsion of Students

JKF – Disciplinary Removal of Students with Disability

Adopted: 09/78

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