

MECDHH/GBSD Policy & Procedure

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT		ID: JIC
Section A: A Foundations & Basic Commitments	Adopted:	Last Revised: January 8, 2020

Promoting ethical and responsible student behavior is an essential component of the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing/Governor Baxter School for the Deaf (MECDHH/GBSD) Board's educational mission.

The MECDHH/GBSD 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 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 Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing/Governor Baxter School for the Deaf 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 discipline is administered fairly, promptly, and appropriately.

The Student Code of Conduct applies to students who are on school property, who are in attendance at school or at any school-sponsored activity, or whose conduct at any time or place directly interferes with the operations, discipline, or general welfare of the school.

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

Standards for Ethical and Responsible Behavior

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

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

Code of Conduct

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

- On school property
- 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

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General Behavior Expectations and Discipline Policies

The following expectations for student behavior are fundamental to the safe, orderly and respectful environment in our schools. Each student should:

1. Be courteous to all students, staff and visitors
2. Respect the rights and privileges of other students and school staff
3. Obey all Board policies and school rules governing student conduct
4. Follow directions from school staff
5. Cooperate with staff in maintaining school safety, order and discipline
6. Attend school regularly
7. Meet school standards for grooming and dress
8. Respect the property of others, including school property and facilities
9. Refrain from cheating or plagiarizing the work of others
10. Refrain from vulgarity, profanity, obscenity, lewdness, and indecency

Violations of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action. Disciplinary consequences depend upon the seriousness of the violation and the student's prior disciplinary record. Consequences will 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.

Expectations

The following is a summary of the school unit'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 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 prevail.

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.

B. Weapons

Students shall not possess or use weapons of any kind (examples include but are not limited to firearms, explosives, and knives). 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.

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C. Bullying and Cyberbullying

Bullying is not acceptable conduct in MECDHH/GBSD schools and is prohibited in any format including social media. Any student who engages in conduct that constitutes bullying shall be subject to disciplinary consequences including suspension and/or expulsion. 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 suspension, expulsion and/or other appropriate disciplinary measures.

E. Discrimination and Harassment/Sexual Harassment

Students should not discriminate against other students on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, or disability. Nor should students harass one another on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, or disability. Sexual harassment is also prohibited. Harassment is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

F. Drug and Alcohol Use

Students shall not distribute, possess, use or be under the influence of “bath salts” or of any alcoholic beverage, drug, or look-alike substance as described in Board policy. Violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from school.

G. Tobacco Use

Students shall not smoke, use, possess, sell or distribute any tobacco products. This prohibition also applies to e-cigarettes and products and paraphilia associated with “vaping.” Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from school.

H. Conduct on School Buses

Students must comply with all school rules while on school buses. Students who violate these rules on a school bus may have their riding privileges suspended or revoked, and may also be subject to additional disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, depending upon the particular violation.

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I. Computer/Internet Use

Students may use school computers, networks and Internet services only for educational purposes. Students shall comply with all policies and rules 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 MECDHH/GBSD Board policies and school rules while participating in athletics and extracurricular activities. Students who violate policies and rules may be subject to suspension or removal from the team/activity as well as additional disciplinary action under applicable Board policies and/or school rules.

Removal of Disruptive/Violent/Threatening Students

1. Students who are disruptive, violent or threatening death or bodily harm to others may be removed from classrooms, school buses, or other school property when necessary to maintain order and safety. The staff member who orders the student removed should arrange to have the student escorted to the office or other designated location.
2. If a student does not comply with a staff member's order to leave, the staff member will contact an administrator, or, if not available, another suitable person, who shall respond promptly.
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.
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 from imminent physical harm or to quell a disturbance. Whenever practicable, law enforcement should be called to restrain or physically remove the non-compliant student. The administrator may invoke the school unit's emergency management plan if appropriate.

Special Services

1. **Referral.** The school unit 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 parent believes that the student's behavior may warrant a change in educational programming.

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Referrals to Law Enforcement Authorities

The Executive Director and Directors 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 Executive Director or Directors may also inform law enforcement authorities when they have reason to suspect that a student or staff member may have violated a local, state or federal statute. All serious offenses, as determined by the Executive Director or designee, 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 handbooks and/or other means selected by the Executive Director 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 and 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

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