

CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

The School District of Pittsburgh is committed to providing every student with the opportunity to attend school in an environment that is safe, free of violence and drugs and conducive to learning. This goal is of the highest priority because excellence in education cannot be achieved unless schools and classrooms are safe and orderly. The Code of Student Conduct was developed so that all students, staff and parents of the District fully understand the expectations for student behavior while in attendance in our schools, while attending school sponsored activities or while riding on transportation systems serving our school district.

We entrust the safety of each of our children to the principals of our schools. We support principals' efforts to maintain safe and caring learning environments, where students and staff can interact free of disruption and unnecessary distractions. The Code of Student Conduct is applicable in all situations where principals and school staffs have jurisdiction over students — while they are in our schools, on the way to or from our schools, on our school buses, on our school premises and at all of our school-sponsored events.

The relationship between academic achievement and the social/emotional growth of our students is tightly connected. It is critical that each of our schools develop a safe, orderly and welcoming school plan that ensures not only the safety of each of our students but promotes a safe and orderly academic classroom environment so that we maximize learning for all students. The district is committed to having each of our schools invest in school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports plan that all teachers, staff, students and parents embrace. This plan will then encompass the Code of Student Conduct as well as other positive behavior strategies and management techniques that are unique to the individual culture of the school.

The responsibility to create and maintain a safe school environment rests with the principal in collaboration with staff, students, parents, and the school community. Effective schools have established practices and routines that teach and reinforce appropriate school and classroom behavior. These practices and routines are part of each school's safety plan, and we anticipate that they will be fully supported by all members of the school community. The school safety plan represents a proactive approach to safe school development that encourages student self discipline, thereby minimizing the use of exclusionary interventions for violations of the Code of Student Conduct.

Like academic growth, growth in social skills is expected of all our students. When a student's behavior falls short of expectations, it must be corrected if all students are to obtain maximum benefit from our educational offerings. The School District of Pittsburgh is prepared to assist these students with a fair and consistent discipline program designed to change undesired behavior while ensuring the rights of all. We expect all students, staff and parents to fully comply with the regulations and procedures contained in this Code, so that our schools will be free of any activity that threatens the health, safety or welfare of the school community.

Good attendance is another important behavior that contributes to learning and ultimately success at work. We understand the importance of regular student attendance at school. Therefore, whenever appropriate, we will exercise a variety of disciplinary interventions to correct student misbehavior, in lieu of exclusion from school. We understand that some misconduct is of such a serious nature that a student must be removed from the school in order to preserve the safety and order of the school and the well being of the student and others. When exclusion from school for an extended period of time is necessary, we will afford students and parents other educational and support options outside of the mainstream.

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Code of Student Conduct
PART I

Section I:
**Definitions, Rules
and Infractions**

Section II:
**Procedures for Dealing
with Student Misconduct**

**Supporting a Safe and
Welcoming Environment**

Part one – Section one: Definitions, Rules and Infractions

DEFINITIONS

1. **PARENT:** When used in these procedures, the term “parent” shall include every parent, guardian or person in parental relation, having control or charge of any child or children in attendance at a school in the School District of Pittsburgh.
2. **ADMINISTRATOR:** When used in these procedures, the term “administrator” shall refer to the principal, assistant principal, administrative practitioner, responsible teacher or any other person to whom the principal may legally delegate his/her authority.
3. **DESIGNEE:** When used in these procedures, the term “designee” shall refer to any administrator who has been designated to act on behalf of the Superintendent in matters of student discipline.
4. **STUDENT:** When used in these procedures, the term “student” shall refer to any person enrolled in any of the district’s programs, whether in comprehensive elementary, middle, secondary, magnet or vocational schools, or in the alternative education schools or programs that have been established to serve children of school age.
5. **HEARING OFFICER:** When used in these procedures, the term “hearing officer” shall refer to any board member or contractor authorized by the Board of School Directors to hear cases involving violations of the Code of Student Conduct.
6. **DISABLED STUDENT:** One who is “protected eligible” or “thought to be eligible” for protection as a student with an exceptionality. This classification does not include gifted students.

GENERAL REGULATIONS

1. **SEARCH OF SCHOOL PROPERTY:** All school property, such as lockers, desks, etc., assigned to students is the property of the Pittsburgh Public Schools. The student is given a temporary privilege to use the property and this privilege may be revoked at any time. School property should not be used to store materials, objects, etc. that are in violation of this Code, school rules, or any statutes or ordinances. The school administrator may authorize the search of school property temporarily assigned to students. Prior to a search of said property, the students involved shall be notified and given an opportunity to be present. However, where school authorities have a reasonable suspicion that the property contains materials that pose a threat to the health, welfare or safety of students in the school, it may be searched without prior warning.

Students shall have no expectation of privacy as to lockers, desks, or other school property temporarily assigned for personal use. School personnel may remove from lockers or desks any articles that are prohibited at school or could be used to interfere with or disrupt the educational process.

2. **SEARCH OF STUDENT'S PERSON:** No student may conceal on his/her person or in a purse, handbag, book bag etc., any weapon, narcotic, dangerous drug, drug paraphernalia, alcohol, pagers or any other substance or object that is in violation of this Code, local statutes, ordinances or school rules. If the building administrator has reasonable suspicion that a student is in possession of an item that constitutes a violation of the Criminal Code or the School Code, a search of the student's person may be authorized.
3. **SCHOOL VISITATIONS:** All visitors, whether students or non-students, must register in the school office and state the purpose of the visit. The principal has the prerogative to approve, disapprove or reschedule the visit for a more appropriate time. All visitors or other persons on school premises must identify themselves when requested by school personnel. This includes school-sponsored activities and events. If the person does not properly identify himself/herself, or his/her purpose, the person is trespassing, and the appropriate legal action will be taken. Any person whose actions or language threatens the health, safety, or welfare of students or staff may be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law and may be barred from visiting a school or attending a school sponsored event.
4. **SCHOOL TOBACCO CONTROL:** Act 128 of 2000 requires school districts to prohibit the use of tobacco by persons in school buildings, school buses, and on school property owned, leased or under the control of a school district. No designated smoking areas can be within 50 ft of school buildings, stadiums or bleachers. Violators will be prosecuted.
5. **USE OF REASONABLE FORCE:** Reasonable force may be used by administrators and staff:
 - to quell a disturbance
 - to maintain order.
 - to obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects.
 - for the purpose of self-defense.
 - for the protection of persons or property.
 - **Corporal punishment of any sort is absolutely prohibited.**
6. **MANDATED REPORTING:** The school district is required by the Child Protective Services Law to report all cases of suspected child abuse to the Office of Children, Youth and Families (CYF) including all cases of student-on-student child abuse that occur on school grounds, at school sponsored events and during travel to and from school. The mandatory report made to CYF is in addition to any school discipline and/or charges filed with the local magistrate.

BUS AND BUS STOP RULES

- Remember that all school rules apply to when students are on the bus and at the bus stop.
- Violations that occur involving the school bus and/or incidents that occur while students are on the way to school (bus stop/neighborhood) or returning from school (bus stop/neighborhood) may result in disciplinary action.
- Students are expected to observe the following rules for safety and courtesy:

At the Bus Stop

- Arrive at the assigned stop ten (10) minutes before bus pickup
- Stand on the sidewalk or the edge of the street by the curb
- Stay off private property
- Do not stand on the traveled part of the road
- Be respectful and watchful of traffic
- Wait in a quiet and orderly manner

When the Bus Arrives

- Allow the bus to come to a complete stop
- Board the bus in a quiet and orderly manner

On the Bus

- Obey the bus driver and exhibit orderly conduct
- Be courteous and respectful of people and property
- Remain seated at all times
- Keep head, hands and feet inside the bus
- Keep the bus clean
- Use of profane language, eating, drinking, smoking, throwing objects, unsafe objects, unsafe objects or weapons and vandalism will result in disciplinary action by your school

Leaving the Bus

- Remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop
- Leave the bus in an orderly manner
- Leave at your assigned bus stop
- Cross in front of the bus
- Leave the bus stop in an orderly manner

RULES OF STUDENT CONDUCT

1. **DISRUPTION OF SCHOOL:** A student shall not use violence, force, noise, profanity, defiance, coercion, threats, conspiracy, fear, passive resistance, harassment (racial, gender, ethnic or sexual), intimidation, or any such conduct, to cause the substantial and material disruption or obstruction of any lawful mission, process, policy or function of the school or the School District. Neither shall he/she engage in such conduct or urge other students to engage in such conduct if such a disruption or obstruction is reasonably certain to result.
2. **DAMAGE, DESTRUCTION OR THEFT OF SCHOOL PROPERTY:** A student shall not intentionally cause or attempt to cause substantial damage to school property, or steal or attempt to steal school property.
3. **DAMAGE, DESTRUCTION OR THEFT OF PRIVATE PROPERTY:** A student shall not intentionally cause or attempt to cause substantial damage to private property, or steal or attempt to steal private property. Valuable private property should not be brought to school. The District assumes no responsibility for the loss or theft of such property.
4. **ASSAULT ON A SCHOOL EMPLOYEE:** A student shall not intentionally cause, attempt to cause, or threaten to cause physical injury or intentionally behave in such a way that could reasonably cause physical injury to any school employee.
5. **ASSAULT ON A STUDENT OR OTHER PERSON NOT EMPLOYED BY THE SCHOOL:** A student shall not intentionally do or threaten to do serious bodily injury or intentionally behave in such a way that could reasonably cause physical injury to any person.
6. **WEAPONS AND DANGEROUS INSTRUMENTS:** A student shall not possess, handle or transmit a weapon while on any school property, while at any school-sponsored or approved activity or while walking or being transported in any manner to or from a school or school-sponsored or approved activity.
 - The term “weapon,” as used in this Code of Student Conduct shall include but shall not be limited to any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, explosive, mace, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle and any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.
 - The term “firearm” means any weapon (including but not limited to a starter gun) that is designed to or may be readily converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive. This Rule also includes the frame or receiver of any such weapon, firearm muffler, firearm silencer or any destructive device (as defined in 18 U.S.C. §921 {a}, {4}).

- This rule does not apply to a student's use of a weapon as part of a program approved by a school when the student is participating in an approved program; nor does this rule apply to a weapon that is unloaded and is possessed by a student traversing school property for the purpose of obtaining access to public or private lands used for lawful hunting, if the entry on school premises is authorized by school authorities.
- A student found to be in violation of this rule shall be expelled for a period of not less than one year.

The Superintendent of the School District may recommend discipline short of expulsion on a case-by-case basis (24 P.S. § 13-1317.2). In the case of a disabled student, the Superintendent shall take all steps necessary to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, (20 U.S.C. § 1400).

- 7. DRUGS INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, ALCOHOL, AMPHETAMINES, BARBITURATES, ANY FORM OF COCAINE, HALLUCINOGENS, DESIGNER DRUGS, MARIJUANA AND NARCOTICS:** A student shall not possess, use, distribute, or be under the influence of any intoxicant of any kind. This is a drug free school district; any amount of an illegal drug is unacceptable.

The possession of drug-related paraphernalia (ex: rolling papers, roach clips, hemostats, pipes or parts of pipes, and other homemade devices) also constitutes a violation of this rule.

Use of a drug as authorized by a medical prescription from a registered physician for the student for whom it is prescribed shall not be considered a violation of this rule.

A student found to be in violation of this rule shall be placed in an Alternative Education program for a period of not less than one quarter and may be expelled.

*Please note in accordance with IDEA alcohol is not considered a drug that permits the removal of a disabled student with an IEP to an alternative education placement.

- 8. Disorderly Conduct:** A student shall not act or behave in a way that substantially disrupts the orderly conduct of the school or learning environment or that poses a threat to the health, safety, and/or welfare of students, staff, or others. Causing annoyance, alarm, or inconvenience is also unacceptable. This includes violent and unruly behavior, unreasonable noise, the use of obscene language and gestures, and the creation of hazardous or physically offensive conditions that serve no legitimate purpose on school grounds. Fighting may result in disorderly conduct charges being filed with the local magistrate.

Any act or behavior which substantially disrupts the orderly conduct of the school function or learning environment; poses a threat to the health, safety and/or welfare of students, staff or others. The intent may be to cause annoyance, alarm or inconvenience. This includes violent or tumultuous behavior, unreasonable noise and the use of obscene language or gesture or creation of hazardous or physically offensive conditions that serve no legitimate purpose. Fighting may result in disorderly conduct charges being filed with the local magistrate.

9. UNAUTHORIZED PRESENCE DURING SCHOOL HOURS

- A. On School Grounds: A student shall not be on any portion of the school grounds where his/her presence is unauthorized, nor remain after having been either ordered or requested to leave by any school employee possessing apparent authority over student conduct. A student should not be:
1. on the school grounds where the student is regularly enrolled, during any period of suspension which includes exclusion from the school of regular enrollment where such order of exclusion has been in fact made known to the student prior to the incident of unauthorized appearance.
 2. on the school grounds of any school or site of required school programming other than that student's school of regular enrollment or attendance, at any time other than when a school activity, function, or event is being held and the student's presence is either required or permitted, based on predetermination by the principal of the school at which the activity is being held.
 3. presence on the school grounds while in the company of a parent or guardian for the purpose of meeting with a school employee to discuss the student's status, or presence on the school grounds for the purpose of proceeding directly to the school office with prior permission of the principal shall not be considered a violation of this rule.
- B. On Private Or Public Property: During school hours students must be in school unless they have an approved reason for absence. Students who are illegally absent from school may be charged with truancy for their unauthorized presence in private homes, stores, malls, parks or other places. Students may also be picked up by law enforcement officers.

- 10. TOBACCO USE:** A student shall not use tobacco in school buildings, school buses, or on any property owned by, leased by or under the control of the Board of Public Education. This property includes, but is not limited to, sidewalks contiguous to school property, parking lots, athletic fields, courtyards and other campus grounds.
- 11. POSSESSION OF PAGERS, LASERS, RADIOS, CD'S AND CERTAIN ELECTRONIC OR TELECOMMUNICATION DEVICES. STUDENTS MAY POSSESS CELL PHONES, HOWEVER, THEY MAY NOT BE VISIBLE OR TURNED ON.** A student shall not possess any paging device, commonly referred to as a beeper, radio, CD, laser pointer or related electronic equipment or other telecommunication device on school grounds, at school sponsored activities, or on buses or other vehicles provided by the School District. Students shall not have cell phones turned on in school buildings or on school grounds during school hours. Cell phones are not permitted to be visible. Students found to be in violation of this rule will be subject to disciplinary action and confiscation of the device. School authorities may approve the presence of a beeper for a student only under the following circumstances:
- A. The student is a member of a volunteer fire company, ambulance or rescue squad.
 - B. The student has a need for the presence of a beeper due to the medical condition of an immediate family member.
- 12. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** A student shall not engage in, participate in, nor knowingly provide another student with the opportunity to engage in academic dishonesty related to examinations, as well as laboratory, homework and other projects and assignments, whether done during or outside of school hours. Academic dishonesty shall include, but not be limited to, all forms of cheating, plagiarism, pre-exam access to test forms, representing someone else's work as their own, and the unauthorized use of aids during examinations, projects and assignments. Unauthorized aids include but are not limited to electronic/telecommunication devices.
- 13. HARASSMENT:** A student shall not engage in any act that violates the District's Harassment Policy, including but not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature. For more information or for a copy of the District policy prohibiting harassment, please contact your building principal or visit the District's website at www.pps.k12.pa.us.

14. MISUSE OF COMPUTERS/COMPUTER NETWORKS: A student shall not engage in any act that violates the District's Network Usage and Safety Policy, any individual school computer use guidelines or laptop computer program guidelines, including, but not limited to the following:

Non-school-related work

- A. Hate mail, discriminatory remarks, and offensive and inflammatory communications
- B. Accessing obscene or pornographic materials
- C. Loading or use of unauthorized games, programs, files, or other electronic media
- D. Destruction, modification or abuse of network hardware, software, or information
- E. Impersonation of another user, anonymity and pseudonyms
- F. Creation of links to other networks whose content or purpose would tend to violate the District's Internet/Computer Use Policy
- G. Transmission of sexually suggestive language or images.

15. UNDESIRABLE GROUP ACTIVITY: Disruption and/or intimidation caused by the following:

- A. The wearing of any type of clothing or jewelry associated with undesirable groups
- B. The use of undesirable group language or the writing or gesturing of any sign or symbol identified or associated with undesirable groups
- C. Confrontations identified or associated with undesirable groups or their activities
- D. Hazing

16. FIGHTING: A student shall not engage in physical violence, aggressiveness or confrontation to settle disputes or resolve conflicts.

17. BULLYING: The Board prohibits all forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying by students. Bullying means an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting, that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the intent or effect of:

- 1. Creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student's education; or
- 2. Physically, emotionally or mentally harming a student ; or
- 3. Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm; or
- 4. Placing a student in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property

Bullying includes cyber-bullying and/or bullying on social networking websites and may include acts that occur outside of school if certain criteria are met. The complete policy, complaint and investigation procedures are posted on the district website, in every building and classroom.

INFRACTIONS

Infractions are divided into two categories: Level 1 for minor infractions and Level 2 for more serious infractions.

1. **LEVEL 1 INFRACTIONS** are those of a less serious nature that do not necessarily pose a threat to the health, safety or property of any person. Staff persons must use appropriate forms of discipline intervention to correct misbehavior manifested in less serious infractions. It is advisable for staff persons to keep a record of discipline interventions and share this documentation at the request of a student, parent or administrator. In most cases of Level 1 infractions, students may not necessarily be referred to an administrator. If Level 1 behaviors are repetitive after appropriate discipline interventions have been made, the student should then be referred to an administrator.

2. EXAMPLES OF LEVEL 1 INFRACTIONS

- Truancy and Class cuts
- Tardiness to school and class
- Minor class disruption
- Inappropriate personal property (radios, food etc)
- Pestering, teasing or bothering
- Refusal to participate in class
- Refusal to comply with reasonable staff directives
- Failure to prepare for learning activity
- Inappropriate language or gestures
- Littering

3. EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS

- Phone or written notification to parent
- Student/Teacher Conference
- Student/Counselor Conference
- Teacher/Parent Conference
- Written assignment
- Detention (after-school) (during recess) (Saturday)
- Suspension of field trips, assemblies or other special privileges
- Behavior Management Contract
- Staffing
- Utilize supportive resources (IST, SAP, etc)
- Re-education regarding rules or policies

4. **LEVEL 2 INFRACTIONS** are those of a serious nature that may pose a threat to the health, safety or property of any person. Level 2 infractions include those listed in Section I of this document and any violation of local, state or federal laws, statutes or ordinances. Staff persons must notify an administrator when a level 2 infraction occurs. The notification should normally take the form of a discipline

referral or statement describing the incident. The administrator must complete an investigation of the incident and gather written statements from all witnesses. The administrator must notify the student and parent of all charges, consequences and due process rights during the disciplinary process.

5. EXAMPLES OF LEVEL 2 INFRACTIONS

- Disruption of School
- Damage, destruction or theft of property
- Assault on any person
- Fighting
- Bullying
- Terroristic threats or conspiracies to commit violent acts
- Possession or use of a weapon
- Possession or use of alcohol, tobacco or any other drugs
- Harassment or assault
- Arson or setting of false fire alarms
- Academic dishonesty
- Racial or ethnic harassment or intimidation
- Unauthorized presence in classrooms or on school grounds
- Unauthorized presence on public or private property
- Inciting a disturbance or melee
- Disorderly behavior on school bus
- Refusal to comply with Level 1 interventions
- Disrespect/defiance
- Violation of Network Usage and Safety

6. EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS

- Exclusion from extracurricular activities
- Referral for criminal prosecution
- Referral to Childline (Mandatory reporting of Child Abuse)
- Suspension of transportation privileges
- Restitution by community/school service
- Core team referral
- Internal or external evaluation or counseling
- Written verification of assessment or evaluation
- Behavior management contract
- Parent conference or staffing
- Referral to District Justice
- Exclusion from special events, promotion or commencement exercises
- In-School Suspension
- Out-of-School Suspension (1-10 days)
- Alternative Education Placement
- Expulsion (11 or more days) (Permanent)

(The administrator shall determine whether an offense is a Level 1 or Level 2 infraction.) The examples of infractions or interventions are not all inclusive.

7. REFERRALS OF MISCONDUCT TO SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Teachers shall continue to make every effort to resolve discipline problems as fully as possible within their own classrooms or other areas of responsibility. A teacher may refer a student to the school office where an alleged violation of the Rules of Student Conduct has occurred or where repeated problems of a lesser nature have occurred and where, despite the personal efforts of the teacher involved, the alleged misconduct has not been satisfactorily corrected. The teacher shall confer with the principal, and upon the request of the principal, shall submit a written statement of the facts relating to the alleged misconduct, as the teacher knows them. The statement shall be documented upon a form approved by the Superintendent of Schools or Designee.

The teacher and the student shall be informed in all cases of the results of any conference and/or the adjustment related thereto, prior to the student's return to class. In a situation where the principal determines that the teacher's presence at the conference is inadvisable or unnecessary, the teacher may request to be informed in writing of the results of said conference and/or adjustment. Such results shall be communicated to the teacher on the same day the decision is rendered.

No student should be returned to a classroom from which he/she has been referred to the school office until the teacher involved has received the principal's disposition of the referral. Such results shall be communicated to the teacher on the same day the decision is rendered when possible.

Proper records of all teacher referrals involving serious student misconduct shall be maintained in the school office in a manner approved by the Superintendent of Schools or Designee. Such records of referrals shall not be made upon the student's permanent record card. [Certain violations of rules 2 and 4 or 5 may require completion of "Assault on Person/Employee" or "Vandalism Theft Report". Injuries necessitate completing an accident report.]

NOTE: Throughout the entire Code of Student Conduct references are made to staff members who hold various positions such as teacher, principal, etc., and other references are made to various current School District staff position titles and/or offices. In all such instances, the reference to the individual, position, office, division, etc., includes designees in all appropriate situations, and/or successors.

Level I Infractions		DISCIPLINARY ACTION*												
<p>LEVEL 1 INFRACTIONS are those of a less serious nature that do not necessarily pose a threat to the health, safety or property of any person. Staff persons must use appropriate forms of discipline intervention to correct misbehavior manifested in less serious infractions. It is advisable for staff persons to keep a record of discipline interventions and share this documentation at the request of a student, parent or administrator. In most cases of Level 1 infractions, students may not necessarily be referred to an administrator. If Level 1 behaviors are repetitive after appropriate discipline interventions have been made, the student should then be referred to an administrator.</p>		<p>Phone or written notification to parent Student/Teacher Conference Student/Counselor Conference Teacher/Parent Conference Written assignment Detention (after-school) (during recess) (Saturday) Suspension of field trips, assemblies or other special privileges Behavior Management Contract Staffing Referral for supportive resources (IST, SAP, etc) e-education regarding rules or policies Other</p>												
OFFENSES	Truancy and Class cuts	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	Tardiness to school and class	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	Minor class/bus disruption	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	Inappropriate personal property (radios, food etc)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	Pestering, teasing or bothering	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	Refusal to participate in class	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	Refusal to comply with reasonable staff directives	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	Failure to prepare for learning activity	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	Inappropriate language or gestures	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	Littering	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	Other	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

* These examples of infractions and disciplinary actions are not all inclusive. The District maintains the right to pursue any necessary disciplinary action to maintain the safety of its staff and students.

Easy Reference Guides for Disciplinary Action

Level II Infractions		DISCIPLINARY ACTION*															
<p>LEVEL 2 INFRACTIONS are those of a serious nature that may pose a threat to the health, safety or property of any person. Level 2 infractions include those listed in Section I of this document and any violation of local, state or federal laws, statutes or ordinances. Staff persons must notify an administrator when a Level 2 infraction occurs. The notification should normally take the form of a discipline referral or statement describing the incident. The administrator must complete an investigation of the incident and gather written statements from all witnesses. The administrator must notify the student and parent of all charges, consequences and due process rights during the disciplinary process.</p>		Exclusion from extracurricular activities	Referral for criminal prosecution	Referral to Childline	Suspension of transportation privileges	Restitution by community/school service	Core team referral	Internal or external evaluation or counseling	Written verification of assessment or evaluation	Behavior management contract	Parent conference or staffing	Referral to District Justice	Exclusion from special events, promotion or commencement exercises	In-School Suspension	Out-of-School Suspension (1-10 days)	Alternative Education Placement	Expulsion (11 or more days or Permanent)
OFFENSES	Disruption of school/bus	●			●	●					●	●		●	●	●	●
	Damage, destruction or theft of property	●	●		●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Disorderly behavior on school bus	●	●		●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
	Academic dishonesty	●	●		●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●		
	Disrespect/defiance	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Terroristic threats or conspiracies to commit violent acts	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Fighting	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
	Bullying	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Racial/ethnic harassment/intimidation	●	●	●	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Unauthorized presence in classrooms or on school grounds	●	●		●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●		
	Unauthorized presence on public or private property	●	●		●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●		
	Arson or setting of false fire alarms	●	●		●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Inciting a disturbance or melee	●	●		●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Assault on any person	●	●	●	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Possession or use of a weapon	●	●		●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Possession or use of alcohol, tobacco or any other drugs	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Sexual harassment or sexual assault	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Refusal to comply w/ Level 1 interventions	●	●		●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Repeated Level I or II infractions	●	●		●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Other	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

* These examples of infractions and disciplinary actions are not all inclusive. The District maintains the right to pursue any necessary disciplinary action to maintain the safety of its staff and students.

Part one – Section two: Procedures for Dealing with Student Misconduct

A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. Coverage
 - a. Alleged misconduct shall be dealt with by the principal whenever:
 - a teacher considers a problem of classroom discipline to be so serious as to warrant the principal's attention.
 - the alleged misconduct constitutes a violation of the rules that govern serious misconduct.
 - the principal deems it advisable that he/she deals personally with the misconduct.
2. Principal's Investigation
 - a. In dealing with alleged misconduct, the principal shall investigate the incident and hear all available accounts of it. The student shall be afforded the opportunity to raise any defense he/she thinks is relevant, and shall be permitted, at his/her option, to submit a written statement of the facts relating to the alleged misconduct. If the student requests that other witnesses be questioned, the principal should talk to them if possible. If the student makes a reasonable claim of other defensive matter, that if true, would free him/her from blame but is not immediately available, the principal may postpone disciplinary action for a reasonable time until such evidence may be presented to him/her provided that the orderly functioning of the school is not adversely affected.
 - b. No student shall be suspended until the student has been informed of the reasons for the suspension and given an opportunity to respond. Prior notice of the intended suspension need not be given when it is clear that the health, safety, or welfare of the school community is threatened.

B. PRINCIPAL'S AUTHORITY TO SUSPEND STUDENTS

1. If the principal investigates a student's alleged misconduct and decides to take disciplinary action, he/she must investigate and take action on all alleged misconduct known to him/her at that time.

2. When a principal has sufficient evidence that a student's misconduct warrants a suspension, the following options may be recommended:
 - a. In-School Suspension
 - b. Short-Term Suspension
 - c. Alternative Education Placement
 - d. Expulsion

C. IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS

1. Parents must be notified of all in-school suspensions.
2. The parent of any student who receives an in-school suspension, which exceeds ten (10) consecutive school days, shall be offered a conference with the principal.

D. SHORT-TERM SUSPENSIONS

1. Out-of-School Suspensions up to three (3) school days:
 - a. For suspensions up to three (3) school days, the principal may act only after investigating the misconduct and only for the following reasons:
 - A violation of the Rules of Student Conduct
 - Misconduct of the same type as that prohibited by the Rules of Student Conduct, but which does not rise to the gravity of the misconduct stated in these rules, or
 - Repeated misconduct of an individually less severe nature that has created a substantial disruption of the educational process within the school,
 - b. Parents must be notified regarding the suspension.
 - c. All out of school suspensions must be entered into the student misconduct system.
2. Suspensions shall be served on days when class is in regular session. Suspension shall not be served on school holidays or days that the school is closed for any reason, including, but not limited to inclement weather.

E. OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS FOR 4 TO 10 DAYS

1. If upon hearing and reviewing all available accounts of the alleged misconduct and after an informal hearing with the parents, the principal determines that a penalty in excess of a three (3) day suspension is appropriate, he/she shall refer the matter to the Office of Student Services and initiate the procedure for obtaining a review and determination consistent with the

provisions of the Code. The Office of Student Services will review the information including the evidence, student grades and attendance, discipline record and behavior management interventions attempted by the school. A determination will then be made of the best discipline option for the student. The principal must provide this information to the Office of Student Services no later than the third day of suspension. A formal case review will be scheduled following an informal hearing upon request of the parent/guardian.

The Office of Student Services will monitor all student suspension information to ensure that a variety of intervention strategies are utilized to facilitate positive student behavior.

2. Students in grades 6 – 12 placed on 4-10 day suspensions will be temporarily assigned to a Transition Center after the informal hearing, but no later than the 4th day of the suspension. Attendance at the Transition Center is mandatory. Students will be provided with academic support while in the Transition Center. Students will complete academic assignments from their regular teachers while at the Center. Students will be marked absent from school when not in attendance at the Transition Center.
3. Suspensions shall be served on days when class is in regular session. Suspension shall not be served on school holidays or days that the school is closed for any reason, including, but not limited to inclement weather.

F. ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENTS

When students are consistently demonstrating behavior that is disruptive to the learning environment or if they have been involved in serious misconduct such as drug violations, assault or physical abuse of a student or staff person, the principal can notify the Office of Student Services that an Alternative Placement is warranted. The principal will prepare a document file for review by the Office of Student Services after an information hearing. The student may be assigned to the appropriate Alternative Education Program. An Educational Support Plan (ESP) will be developed for the student. The student will remain in the Alternative Education Placement until he/she satisfactorily completes the Educational Support Plan. Students will be provided with necessary academic, counseling, social and mental health services to facilitate a successful return to the regular school program.

Note: Cases Involving Assault

An intentional and serious incident of assault, or attempted assault, by a student to any person, including but not limited to teachers, employees or other students, will result in assignment to

the Alternative Education Center until such time that the student successfully completes the Educational Support Program. It may also require the administering of appropriate penalties, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. A transfer to another school for the balance of the school year, with the further requirement that no less than one (1) full semester shall be spent by the offending student at the school to which he/she is transferred; or
2. An expulsion from school of more than ten (10) school days with the necessary prescribed hearing being conducted, following the expulsion an offending student may be:
 - a. readmitted to the regular school program,
 - b. transferred to another school for no less than one (1) complete quarterly report period or the balance of the school year, or
 - c. a permanent transfer to another school.
3. Criminal charges will be filed against any individual who commits an assault while at school, at a school sponsored event or traveling to or from school.
4. All such offending students who are either transferred to another school or readmitted to their regular school shall be on probation for a period of not less than one (1) complete school year from the date of the offense. Any further assault incident involving such a student during this period of probation may result in the immediate implementation of the expulsion penalties provided above.

Determination of which penalty may be administered in an incident of assault shall be made in the normal manner provided for under this Code of Student Conduct, i.e., commencing with the initial evaluation and action of the principal and continuing with whatever review or hearing is necessary prior to formal imposition of the penalty selected.

G. EXPULSIONS

All expulsions require a Formal Hearing. Students serving 11-20 day expulsions will attend a Transition Center. Students expelled from school in excess of 20 days will attend an alternative placement. The District reserves the right to permanently expel a child in accordance with the law and Board Policy.

H. PROCEDURES

1. **SUSPENSION PROCEDURES:** When a student is suspended, the principal shall:
 - a. immediately inform the student of the reason for the suspension and provide the student with an opportunity to respond.

- b. attempt to contact the student's parent(s) to inform them of the child's conduct and the school's action. If the parent(s) cannot be immediately notified of the suspension, the principal will require the student to remain in the school, in suspended status, for the remainder of the school day.
- c. immediately remove the student to restore order, or to protect persons on the school grounds.
- d. provide written notice to his/her parent(s) fully describing the student's misconduct, stating the rule violation and stating the principal's reason for the action.
- e. make every effort to hold a parent conference with the parent(s) before or at the time the student returns to school.
- f. secure written statements when appropriate and keep on file all documents and relevant information received about the misconduct.
- g. schedule an informal hearing within five (5) days for out-of-school suspensions in excess of 3 days.
- h. a copy of a completed suspension packet should be provided to parent.

2. EXPULSION PROCEDURES

- a. If after his/her investigation and informal hearing, the principal decides that an expulsion is warranted, a request for an expulsion shall be set forth in writing on the approved form and forwarded to the Office of Student Services within three (3) school days of the alleged misconduct.
- b. Prior to suspending or expelling any child who is in regular education for longer than ten (10) school days or transferring the student to an alternative education program, the School District shall perform a Behavior Performance Review to determine whether the student being disciplined should be referred for to an evaluation to determine whether the student is eligible for special education or accommodations pursuant to the IDEA or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Parents may find out more about this review and have access to its results by contacting the appropriate school principal.

- 3. NOTICE OF SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION:** Whenever the principal seeks a suspension for a period from four (4) days to ten (10) days, or an expulsion, written notice shall be sent to the student and to his/her parent(s) within three (3) school days of the alleged incident which gave rise to the request. The notice shall include:

- a. the rule violated and the alleged acts of the student that are in violation of the rule, including a summary of the evidence against him/her.
- b. a tentative time and place for the informal hearing.
- c. notification that written statements about the misconduct, if any, and the student's academic and behavior records are available at the school for examination by the student, his/her parent(s), and his/her representative.
- d. a description of the hearing procedures approved by the School Board.
- e. a statement that the student has the right to an informal hearing within the first five (5) days of suspension.
- f. a statement of action that the principal plans to recommend to the Superintendent's designee, and plans to apply if the case review is waived.
- g. a statement that the student and his/her parent(s) have the right to present witnesses and be represented by legal counsel or some other adult at the hearing.
- h. a copy of a completed suspension packet should be provided for parent.

The Superintendent's designee shall examine the Notice of Exclusion submitted by the principal and shall review both the facts set forth thereon and the action recommended by the principal. In those cases wherein the recommendation of the principal does not exceed an exclusion of ten (10) school days, the matter shall be treated as a Suspension.

In any case, wherein either (a) the recommendation of the principal includes an expulsion, or (b) the Superintendent's designee has substantial reason to believe the student should not be readmitted within ten (10) school days, the matter shall be treated as a temporary expulsion.

4. **SCHEDULING OF THE HEARING:** The Office of Student Services shall schedule all hearings involving temporary or permanent expulsions, as herein defined, to be held within ten (10) days after the first full day of suspension, provided that a hearing may be held at a later time if a request is made by either a student or his/her representative, the principal concurs therein, and good and sufficient cause is shown for the delay in accordance with the State Board of Education Regulations. Failure of a student and his/her parent(s) or representative to appear at any hearing for which adequate notice has been given will not operate to delay the hearing. The administration shall proceed with the hearing in the absence of the student or his/her representative.

In any case wherein a student has been excluded from school for ten (10) school days pending an expulsion, the student will be temporarily reinstated pending the Board hearing, if they do not pose a threat to the health, safety, morals or welfare of others. In all other cases, they will be assigned to an appropriate Alternative Education program. In all cases of expulsion from school, written notice of the finding that the student constitutes a threat to the health, safety, morals or welfare of others shall be provided to the student's parents within forty eight (48) hours of the informal hearing. The same written notice shall be provided to the student and parents following the formal expulsion hearing. In such cases the hearing examiner will provide such written notice at the conclusion of the expulsion hearing. If such notice is not received, the student will be temporarily reinstated pending a final decision of the Board for all removals exceeding ten (10) days.

5. **AVAILABILITY OF RECORDS:** In addition to being provided with a copy of the notice set forth above, the parent(s) or representative of the student involved shall have access to his/her previous behavior record and his/her academic record.
6. **HEARINGS AND ATTENDANCE**
 - a. An informal hearing shall be conducted at the school no later than the fifth day of suspension in all cases involving exclusion from school of four (4) through ten (10) days. The student and parents will be afforded appropriate due process rights during the informal hearing. Case reviews will be conducted following the informal hearing when requested by parents.
 - b. A formal hearing before one (1) or more School Directors of the Board of Public Education, or an independent hearing officer appointed by the Board, shall be held in all cases involving exclusion from school in excess of ten (10) school days.
 - c. Informal and formal hearings may be attended by the appropriate School District personnel, the student, the parents, the student's representative and certain other persons where appropriate.
 - d. Notice of decision will be issued in writing following both the informal and formal hearings.
7. **CONDUCT OF THE HEARING**
 - a. **Closed Hearing:** Witnesses, including teachers involved, should be present only when they are giving information. Conduct of all parties at any hearing shall be under the direct control of the hearing officer, who shall be the School

Director, independent hearing office appointed by the Board, or the administrator conducting the hearing.

A minor student may be excluded at the discretion of the hearing officer with the concurrence of the student's parent(s), other representative when he/she acts in the place of the parent(s), at times when deemed appropriate by the parties.

- b. Student May Remain Silent:** The student may speak in his/her own defense and may be questioned on his/her testimony, but he/she may choose not to testify, and in such cases he/she shall not be threatened with punishment or later punished for refusal to testify.
- c. Records of the Hearing:** At the request of the parents or the student's representative, the hearing officer shall provide for making a record of any information orally presented at the hearing.
- d. Use of Witnesses:** The hearing shall consist of the oral examination of all witnesses that the hearing officer determines may provide information on the matters involved, as well as a review of school records when requested by any party.
- e. Adult Representation in Addition to Parent(s):** If the parent(s) cannot attend or if the student or his/her parent(s) think his/her interest can be protected better by the presence at the hearing of another adult in addition to his/her parent(s), the student may bring another adult to the hearing. The non-parent adult may act as a representative in the defense of the student, with the right to present witnesses, question any and all witnesses, make a statement on the nature of evidence and the proper disposition of the case, and otherwise assist the student; provided, however, that in all cases the student's right to confront his/her accusers and right to cross-examine all witnesses shall be preserved and protected (only one person shall be permitted to act as the representative. The representative shall be designated as such at the outset of the hearing).
- f. Evidence and Witnesses:** Determinations of the weight of all evidence, including but not limited to hearsay, and the credibility of witnesses are the responsibility of the hearing officer in all student discipline hearings.

8. DISPOSITION OF THE CASE

- a. Actions of the Superintendent:** Upon the recommendation of the Office of Student Services the Superintendent of schools may confirm a suspension not to exceed ten (10) school days, and shall forthwith notify both the student

and the parents of the decision reached and the sanction imposed. In all cases involving Expulsion, the reports and recommendations of the Superintendent of Schools shall be transmitted to the Board along with the report and recommendations of the School Directors or the independent hearing officer appointed by the Board.

b. Actions of the Hearing Office or Board Committee:

- (1) in all cases of expulsion, the Hearing Office or Board Committee may dismiss some or all of the charges against the student at the conclusion of the expulsion hearing. If all of the charges are dismissed, the student shall immediately return to the classroom he/she attended prior to the exclusion from school;
- (2) if the Hearing Officer or Board Committee does not dismiss all of the charges, s/he shall determine at the end of the expulsion hearing whether the student's presence in his/her normal classes would constitute a threat to the health, safety, morals or welfare of others;
- (3) the Hearing Officer or Board Committee shall give the student and parent immediate written notice at the conclusion of the expulsion hearing of the immediate threat finding within forty-eight (48) hours if the student and parent fail to appear for the expulsion hearing;
- (4) if the Hearing Officer or Board Committee concludes the student would not be a threat to other students, the student shall immediately return to his/her normal classes pending a final decision of the School Board. A student who has been found to constitute a threat to other students may be removed from the regular education program however, the student must be ensured an appropriate alternative education, pending a final decision of the School Board; or
- (5) the Hearing Officer or Board Committee shall mail its final written decision to the student and parents no later than the fourth day after the expulsion hearing.

c. Actions of the Board of Public Education: In all cases of expulsion, the action of the Board shall not be final until the report and recommendations of the School Director or the independent hearing officer appointed by the Board who heard the case have been reviewed and approved by a majority of the full membership of the Board. Both the student and the parents shall be immediately notified in writing of any action taken by either Student Services, the Superintendent of Schools or the Board of Education.

- d. **Reinstatement Pending a Hearing:** Notwithstanding any other provision contained herein, any student who has been excluded for a period of ten (10) school days without being afforded an opportunity for a hearing will be automatically reinstated pending a hearing and proper disposition thereon, unless there has been a determination that student poses a threat to the health, safety and welfare of the school and the hearing has been delayed for reasons permitted by law. Any determination that a hearing cannot be convened within ten (10) school days of the notification of charges must be made by the Office of Student Services.
 - f. **Requirement for Due Process:** All hearings, informal and formal, shall be held in accordance with 22 Pa. Code § 12.8.
9. **APPEAL:** A decision by the Board of Public Education to expel a student for a period of time in excess of ten (10) school days may be appealed to a court of law within thirty (30) days of the final decision of the Board.
10. **ROLE OF HEARING OFFICER:** Designees of the Board will conduct all expulsion hearings. Expulsion Hearing officers will determine if due process requirements were met and determine if sufficient evidence was presented for each rule violation cited. Their recommendations will be communicated promptly to the board office and considered by the Board at the monthly legislative meetings.
11. **Suspension or Expulsion of Students with Disabilities:** Students eligible under the IDEA or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act cannot be suspended for more than 10 consecutive school days, 11-15 cumulative school days if the removals constitute a pattern, or 15 cumulative school days in one school year for conduct that is a manifestation of their disabilities. A student diagnosed with mental retardation may not be suspended from school unless the Administrator has received written approval by the parent/guardian on the appropriate Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP) form. If the misconduct includes possession of weapons or drugs, or the student inflicts serious bodily injury on another person, then a student, including a student with MR, may be removed for 45 school days regardless of whether the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability. Removals of more than 10 consecutive school days, 11-15 days if a pattern exists or more than 15 cumulative school days are subject to special rules and limitations. Specific questions regarding the discipline of students with disabilities should be directed to the Program for Students with Exceptionalities 412.323.3950.

Code of Student Conduct
PART II

Section I:
Shared Responsibilities
and Student Rights

Section II:
Standards and Procedures for
Attendance and Dress Code

Supporting a Safe and
Welcoming Environment

Part two – Section one: Shared Responsibilities and Student Rights

SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

For our students to be successful, we must all work together. To be effective it is important for everyone to be on the same page and share a common vision. That's why we created the Pittsburgh Pledge.

The Pittsburgh Pledge is our commitment to one another. It recognizes that we each have an important role and responsibilities for preparing all children to achieve academic excellence and strength of character, so that they have the opportunity to succeed in all aspects of life.

The Pittsburgh Pledge

We know that education is the key to our future.

All of us – students, teachers, administrators, families, community, board members and other civic leaders – will take an active role in helping all students.

We pledge to:

- Have high expectations,
- Work hard,
- Achieve academic excellence,
- Keep our schools safe,
- Set a positive example,
- Be respectful and considerate of one another,
- Listen and be open to new ideas.

**Together, we will hold ourselves accountable for achieving
“Excellence for All.”**

Our specific responsibilities are listed on following pages.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

In American society, all citizens have certain rights that are closely associated with corresponding responsibilities. All students within the School District of Pittsburgh have the following responsibilities:

- to attend school regularly and to make a conscientious effort in the classroom.

- to help maintain a climate within the school that is conducive to wholesome learning and living.
- to respect the rights of teachers, students, administrators, and all others who are involved in the educational process.
- to express ideas and opinions in a respectful manner.
- to be aware of and comply with all rules and regulations for student behavior. Students should assume that, until a rule is waived, altered, or repealed in writing, it is in effect.
- to volunteer information in matters relating to the health, safety and welfare of the school community and the protection of school property.
- to dress and groom to meet fair standards of safety, health and cleanliness and not to cause substantial disruption to the education processes.
- to assist the school staff in operating a safe school for all students enrolled therein.
- to comply with Commonwealth and local laws.
- to exercise proper care when using public facilities and equipment.
- to be on time for all classes and other school functions.
- to make up work when absent from school.
- to pursue and attempt to complete satisfactorily the courses of study prescribed by Commonwealth and local school authorities.
- to report information accurately and not use indecent or obscene \ language in student newspapers or publications.
- “To be committed to and make effort towards the completion of high school with the goal of being *Promise-Ready*”

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents should teach their children honesty and respect for the law and the property of others. When parents and schools work together as partners toward these obligations, each individual benefits. Every parent should:

- be familiar with the Code of Student Conduct and discuss its contents with their children.
- be familiar with the student handbook of the school where their children are in attendance and discuss its contents with their children.
- become familiar with the services available to students through the school, its partners and community agencies with whom the school collaborates.
- attend conferences related to their child’s academic performance or behavior.

- request conferences with school personnel when questions or concerns arise regarding their child’s academic performance, behavior, safety, or well-being.
- “To be committed to and make effort towards the completion of high school with the goal of being *Promise-Ready*”

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Each member of the school staff must understand and consistently enforce the Code of Student Conduct and all school rules and regulations. In efforts to enforce District and school rules and regulations, staff persons must respect the rights of students and parents. It is the responsibility of each staff member to utilize the various components of progressive discipline and involve students, parents and support staff in the process. Where appropriate each staff person must:

- develop and implement procedures and routines to maintain school and classroom environments conducive to learning.
- review school and classroom rules and regulations with students regularly.
- notify parents and administrators when student misbehavior is persistent or of a serious nature.
- maintain composure when disciplining students and avoid verbal or physical confrontation.
- respond to disciplinary situations in the school, on school grounds or at school-sponsored events.
- “To be committed to and make effort towards the completion of high school with the goal of being *Promise-Ready*”

ADMINISTRATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The principal must develop and implement procedures and routines to ensure that the school maintains a safe and drug free environment. It is the principal’s responsibility to make certain that the entire school environment is conducive to learning. The principal must also make sure that all students, staff, and parents are fully aware of school rules, procedures and routines for maintaining student discipline and decorum. Every principal must:

- consistently apply the Code of Conduct guaranteeing, clear standards and consequences for student behavior.
- develop and implement a school safety plan.
- provide a copy of school rules and procedures to all students, staff and parents.
- visit classrooms and other areas in and around the school regularly to monitor implementation of the safe school plan.

- respond to all serious cases of student misconduct and to student misbehavior that persists after other appropriate measures of progressive discipline utilized by staff have been exhausted.
- establish a Discipline Committee and convene as needed.
- ensure that parents and students are afforded the appropriate rights of due process prior to suspensions or expulsions.
- ensure that various resources are available to correct academic and behavioral difficulties and that these resources are used when appropriate, prior to out of school suspensions.
- submit an annual report to the Office of Student Services specifying the various intervention strategies and corrective measures available at the school for addressing students with academic or behavioral difficulties.
- “To be committed to and make effort towards the completion of high school with the goal of being *Promise* ready”

STUDENT RIGHTS

All students within the School District of Pittsburgh have the following rights:

- A. All persons between the ages of 6 and 21 years are entitled to a free and full education in the public schools.
- B. Parents or guardians of all children between the ages of 8 and 17 are required by the compulsory attendance law to insure that their children attend an approved educational institution, unless legally excused. Students who have not graduated may not be asked to leave school merely because they have reached 17 years of age if they are fulfilling their responsibilities as students. A student may not be excluded from the public schools or from extracurricular activities because of being married or pregnant.
- C. Students have the constitutional right to express themselves unless such expression materially and substantially interferes with the educational process, threatens immediate harm to the welfare of the school or community, encourages unlawful activity, or interferes with another individual's rights.
- D. Students may use publications, such as handbills, announcements and other means of common communication, so long as the use of school facilities is approved by the authority in charge of those facilities, under the following conditions:
 - Students have the responsibility to obey laws governing libel and obscenity and to be aware of the full meaning of their expression.
 - Students have the responsibility to be aware of the feelings and opinions of others and to give others a fair opportunity to express their views.

- Identification of the individual student or at least one responsible person in a student group may be required on any posted or distributed material.
 - The school principal may require students to submit for prior approval a copy of all materials to be displayed, posted or distributed on school property.
- E. Students have the right to use designated bulletin boards; however, such right is subject to the following conditions:
- The school principal may restrict the use of certain bulletin boards.
 - Bulletin board space shall be provided for the use of students and student organizations.
 - The school principal may require that notices or other communications be officially dated before posting, and that such materials be removed after a prescribed reasonable time to assure full access to the bulletin boards.
- F. School newspapers and publications shall conform to the following:
- Students have a right and are as free as editors of other newspapers to report the news and to editorialize within the provisions below.
 - School officials shall supervise student newspapers published with school equipment, remove obscene or libelous material and edit other material that would cause a substantial disruption or interference with school activities.
 - School officials may not censor or restrict material simply because it is critical of the school or its administration.
 - Prior approval procedures regarding copy for school newspapers shall identify the individual to whom the material is to be submitted and shall establish a limitation on the time required to make a decision. If the prescribed time for approval elapses without a decision, the material shall be considered authorized for distribution.
 - Students who are not members of the newspaper staff shall have access to its pages.
 - Written criteria for submission of material by non-staff members shall be developed and distributed to all students.
- G. The school principal may set forth the time and place of distribution of materials so that distribution does not materially or substantially interfere with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the school.
- H. The constitutional right of freedom of speech guarantees the freedom of public school students to publish materials on their own; however,

- the school has no responsibility to assist students with, or to provide facilities for the publishing of such materials.
 - the students themselves have sole responsibility for any statements published.
 - approval procedures must be followed prior to distribution or display of materials on school property.
- I. It is the responsibility of every citizen to show proper respect to his/her country and its flag. Students may:
- decline to recite the Pledge of Allegiance and may refrain from saluting the flag on the basis of personal belief or religious convictions.
 - choose to refrain from such participation but shall respect the rights and interests of classmates who do wish to participate.
- J. Students have the right to decide upon the length or style of their hair, however, this right may be limited by the school principal:
- If the length or style of hair causes a disruption of the educational process or constitutes a health or safety hazard.
 - If the length or style of the hair presents a problem, some type of covering may be required.
- K. If attire or dress causes the disruption of the educational process or constitutes a health or safety hazard, limitations on dress may be imposed by the school principal. Otherwise, no limitations on dress may be imposed.
- L. Students may be required to wear certain types of clothing while participating in physical education classes, shops, extracurricular activities, or other situations where special attire may be required to insure the health or safety of the student.
- M. A confidential communication made by a student to certain school personnel will not be revealed in legal proceedings under the law. However, information received in confidence from a student may be revealed to the student's parents, the principal or other appropriate authority where the health, welfare or safety of the student or other persons is clearly in jeopardy.
- N. The school principal may search a student's locker and seize any illegal materials. Such materials may be used as evidence against the student in disciplinary proceedings. Prior to a locker search, students shall be notified and given an opportunity to be present. However, where the school principal has a reasonable suspicion that the locker contains materials that pose a threat to the health, welfare and/or safety of students in the school, student lockers may be searched without prior warning. Nevertheless, students have the right not to be subjected to unreasonable searches or seizures.

Part two – Section two: Standards and Procedures for Attendance and Dress Code

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This Policy and its associated guidelines are intended to promote regular school attendance and to facilitate the academic, social, emotional and physical development of students in the School District. The compulsory school attendance law of Pennsylvania requires every child of compulsory school age to be in school unless absent for an approved reason. Parents and/or guardians are charged with the responsibility for their child's/children's school attendance. The School District realizes that it will be necessary for students to be absent on occasion when a student is prevented from attendance for certain reasons such as illness, health care and religious holidays. It has been proven, however, that students who attend school regularly achieve more than those who do not. Class attendance and participation are imperative for academic achievement and necessary for the accomplishment of curriculum objectives. Therefore, it is the policy of the School District that all students be in attendance unless absent for an approved reason. It will be the responsibility of the School Principal or his/her designee to implement these guidelines for the attendance policy of the School District and/or to review any exceptions.

COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Compulsory school age refers to the period of a child's life from the time the child enters school, which may be no later than eight years of age, until the age of seventeen or graduation from high school, whichever occurs first. It is mandatory for all children of compulsory school age to attend and be present at school unless excused from attendance for an approved reason under the Pennsylvania School Code. The School District is responsible for monitoring and maintaining records of attendance of students, and all absences will be treated as unexcused and/or unlawful until the school receives and approves a written excuse explaining the reasons for an absence. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) also demands compulsory attendance. NCLB indicates a ninety percent (90%) attendance rate as the benchmark for academic success. The attendance rates at all schools are used to determine Adequate Yearly Progress. Attendance is compulsory from the federal level down to the state level, with local districts charged with enforcing attendance policies. The School District will utilize all lawful methods set forth in the School Code for enforcing attendance, including but not limited to, filing truancy charges with the local magistrate and/or contacting the county children and youth agency for assessment.

ATTENDANCE STANDARDS

Absence – Absence is defined as non-attendance in school in an individual class, the entire school day or a combination of both. Absence includes tardiness to class and/or school as well as early dismissals.

Excused Absence – An “excused absence” includes the absence of a student for any of the following reasons:

Illness or other urgent reasons – Upon receipt of satisfactory evidence of mental, physical or other urgent reasons, a parent’s written note will excuse a student’s absence. A maximum of ten (10) days of cumulative absences verified by parental notification may be permitted during a school year. All absences beyond ten (10) cumulative days require an excuse from a physician.

Health Care – A student may be excused during school hours to obtain non-school professional health care, including emergency care, hospitalization and/or quarantine. Documentation from the treating licensed health care professional shall be obtained and provided to the school.

Bereavement – A student may be temporarily excused from school for bereavement and/or to attend the funeral of a family member. All such excusals must be reported to and approved by the School Principal or his/her designee.

Religious Holidays and Religious Instruction – A student shall be excused from school for absences occasioned by the observance of the student’s religion recognized by the Board of Education as a bonafide religious holiday.

Weather Emergency – If a decision is made for schools to remain open, parents/guardians have the option to keep their children home for health and safety reasons. Parents/guardians are ultimately responsible for making this decision. If you decide to keep your child home in any situation, including inclement weather, you should call the school to report your child’s absence. A written explanation of the absence must be provided to the homeroom teacher upon return to the school within three (3) days. Failure to provide a written explanation of the absence within three (3) days will result in an unlawful or unexcused absence. The School Principal or his/her designee determines whether a student’s absence will be excused for these reasons.

Involuntary Exclusions – A student who is lawfully absent from school or class due to involuntary exclusion shall be excused. An involuntary exclusion includes suspensions (in-school and out of school), temporary alternative placements and incarceration or home-detention.

School-Approved Activities – A student absent from class or school due to participation in a school, Principal or teacher approved activity, including, but not limited to field trips, service learning, assemblies, support groups, counseling, mentoring, or tutoring shall be lawfully excused.

Other Principal-Approved Excusals – A School Principal or his/her designee may excuse a student from attendance for lawful reasons. Administrator – Approved Excusals are: educational vacations, college visitation, counseling or support groups, or social service agency appointments including, but not limited to Children, Youth and Families.

Unexcused Absence (Unlawful Absence) – All absences that are not excused pursuant to this policy will be considered Unexcused. If a student is under age 17, then an absence that is not excused pursuant to this policy will be considered Unlawful and Unexcused. Tardiness that results in a student missing class without a written lawful excuse will be considered an Unexcused and/or Unlawful absence. Parents/guardians shall submit written explanations for Excused Absences within three (3) calendar days of the absence. If the school does not receive a written explanation within three (3) calendar days of any absence, the absence will be permanently counted as Unexcused and/or Unlawful.

Missed Class Work - A student shall be permitted to make up any assignments, homework or exams missed due to a lawfully Excused Absence. Students who are absent from class or school shall NOT be permitted to make up any missed assignments, homework or exams so long as the absence remains an Unexcused Absence. All work completed and grades earned by students assigned to in-school suspension, suspension, or another temporary alternative placement shall be included in calculating the student's report period grade. Students participating in school approved activities shall be permitted to make-up any missed assignments or exams.

Eligibility for The Pittsburgh Promise ® - The Pittsburgh Promise ® uses attendance as one of several criteria when determining eligibility for scholarships. Suspensions and Unexcused Absences shall count against a student when determining eligibility for the Promise. All other absences are not counted against a student in determining eligibility for the Promise.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

School Principals and Administrators shall be responsible for implementing these attendance standards and for developing any additional attendance referral procedures needed to implement compulsory attendance for their school.

Classroom Teachers shall be responsible for maintaining accurate daily class attendance for all students and must report all unlawful or unexcused class absences to the School Principal or his/her designee.

Homeroom Teachers shall be responsible for maintaining accurate school attendance records and immediately referring all Unexcused and/or Unlawful Absences to the School Principal or his/her designee. Homeroom teachers shall, in addition to the administrative referral required under this section, make every effort to contact a student's parent/guardian via telephone immediately after EACH ABSENCE and inform the parent/ guardian that the student has been referred to the administration due to the Unexcused Absence. If contact is not made by telephone, then the Homeroom Teacher shall contact the parent via mail.

Homeroom teachers shall collect and record all written excuses for student absences. Homeroom teachers shall only accept written excuses within THREE (3) days of the student's absence. Any excuse submitted beyond the THREE (3) days will not be accepted. All written excuses shall be maintained by the Homeroom Teacher. Excuses for absences exceeding TEN (10) cumulative school days must be from a licensed treating physician or be approved by the School Principal or his/her designee.

Legal Notices shall be sent to parents/guardians of all students of compulsory school age (under age seventeen) in substantially the same format provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and available via its website. A parent/guardian shall receive legal notice after each instance of Unlawful and Unexcused Absence. The legal notice shall be issued after the First Unlawful Absence and should include the legal penalties established by law for violation of compulsory attendance laws and the name and contact person for the school contact person. The legal notice issued after the Second Unlawful Absence shall contain the same information. The legal notice issued after the Third Unlawful Absence should contain the same information and additionally shall provide that if the parent/guardian violates the compulsory school law again after three (3) days have expired from the date of the 3rd notice, the parent will be liable without further notice. The school shall schedule a parent/guardian meeting after the 3rd Unlawful Absence to create a Truancy Elimination Plan (TEP). Any subsequent Unlawful Absence will result in official notice being sent via regular and certified mail return receipt requested to the parent/guardian that they are in violation of the TEP or if a TEP has not yet been created, the compulsory school law and that a citation has been filed with the local magistrate.

Notice shall be sent to parents/guardians of all students who are seventeen years of age and older and no longer of compulsory school age after each Unexcused Absence. All notices sent to parents/guardians of students 17 and older are informational and do not constitute a legal notice. However, students 17 and older are subject to school district action as follows: After the third notice of Unexcused Absence, the school shall develop a Truancy Elimination Plan (TEP). If the student continues to accrue Unexcused Absences in violation of this policy and his/her TEP, and the student and his/her parents wish the student to remain enrolled in school, then the District may consider transferring the student to the Standard Evening High School or other appropriate alternative education program. Students who are seventeen years of age and older and are absent for ten (10) consecutive school days, shall thereafter be removed from the active membership roll unless the District is provided with evidence that the absence is legally excused.

Exceptional Students are subject to compulsory school laws, but each exceptional student's individual circumstances will be reviewed by the appropriate Program for Exceptional Students personnel prior to filing a citation with the local magistrate. An exceptional student will not be removed from the rolls or transferred to an alternative placement based on attendance.

RESPONSES TO VIOLATIONS OF ATTENDANCE STANDARDS

Parental Notification: Parents/guardians shall receive written notification after each instance of Unexcused and/or Unlawful Absence. The Official notice of filing of a truancy citation with the local magistrate shall be sent via regular and certified mail return receipt requested in accordance with this policy. (See Legal Notices and Notices above)

Parent Conference: Following the third (3rd) Unexcused and/or Unlawful Absence, the school shall schedule a conference with the student's parent/guardian. The School Principal or his/her designee shall develop a Truancy Elimination Plan (TEP) with the parent/guardian and the student.

Transfer or Disenrollment (Students age 17 or older): After agreeing to a TEP, or if there is not agreement on a Truancy Elimination Plan and three (3) days have passed since the parent/guardian received the official notice of the student's third Unexcused Absence, if the student is absent again for any Unexcused Absence during the remainder of the school year, the student may be transferred to an alternative placement. If a student has ten (10) consecutive Unexcused Absences, s/he may be permanently removed from the active rolls of attendance.

Referral to the Local Magistrate (Students under age 17): After agreeing to a TEP, or if there is not agreement on a Truancy Elimination Plan and three (3) days have passed since the parent/guardian received the official

notice of the student's third Unlawful Absence, if a student is unlawfully absent at any point within the school year, an official notice of unlawful absence shall be sent home via certified mail return receipt requested. The purpose of the notice is to inform the student's parent/guardian that the student has violated the TEP or, if there is no TEP that the child has again violated the compulsory attendance requirements, and to advise the parent/guardian that a citation has been filed with the local magistrate. All future incidents of Unexcused Absences will immediately be referred to the local magistrate. The local magistrate shall be provided with a copy of the student's TEP when referred for a hearing.

Referral to County Children and Youth Agency (Students under age 13): Any student who has not attained age 13 who fails to comply with compulsory attendance and is habitually truant, shall be referred to Children, Youth and Families (CYF) for services. The referral may be in addition to filing a citation with the local magistrate. The School Principal may refer a student 13 years of age or older to CYF in lieu of filing a citation with the local magistrate.

Penalties for Violations of the Compulsory School Law Possible Sentences for Parents:

- Fine of up to \$300 for each offense and court costs
- Completion of a parenting education program
- In cases where a party convicted fails to pay the fine or complete the parenting education program, a subsequent sentencing of up to five (5) days in the county jail
- Completing, in lieu of, or in addition to the previous penalties, community service within the school district for a period up to six (6) months

Possible Sentences for Students:

- Fine of up to \$300 for each offense
- Assignment to an adjudication alternative program
- Adjudication of Dependency by Juvenile Court
- Referral to CYF for services or disposition as a dependent child
- Suspension of driving privileges or ineligibility to apply for a driver's license for 90 days for the first offense and 6 months for the second offense

DRESS CODE/UNIFORMS

The School District of Pittsburgh has an exclusionary dress code. The Board, therefore, resolves that no student shall wear any apparel or jewelry that by words, signs, pictures or any combination thereof appearing on said clothing or jewelry advocates or promotes sexual activity or violence, or the use of alcohol or drugs or demeans or degrades another because of race, sex, religious persuasion, national origin, handicap or disability. Students are expected to wear appropriate clothing at all times while at school. Clothing must not be of any style, length or fit that is of a provocative nature. Revealing attire that permits the exposure of undergarments or private body parts is prohibited. This prohibition shall be in effect during regular school hours and at any school-sponsored event whether on or off school premises.

A prescribed dress code or uniform policy is defined as a policy, either in writing or declared verbally by a given school principal, that requires the student to wear a certain mode of dress during school time, or at any school-sponsored event whether on or off school premises. Individual schools within the District may adopt a prescribed dress code or uniform policy in accordance with the Board's policy. (See school's specific dress code.)