

Student Code of Conduct

Minneapolis Public Schools



MINNEAPOLIS
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Minneapolis Public Schools
John B. Davis Educational Services Center
807 NE Broadway
Minneapolis, MN 55413

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Rights and Responsibilities

Expectations of Schools

- Each school will develop and implement a school-wide behavior plan with input from teachers, administrators, other staff, students and families. The plan will address the following five areas:
 - Quality Instruction
 - Caring Relationships and Teaching Expectations
 - Use of Data for Problem Solving, Continuous Improvement and Accountability
 - Continuum of Interventions
 - Build Cultural Competence and Address Racism.
- Provide a clear process for addressing student concerns.
- Develop school-wide expectations, based on the District's expectations and rules and teach the expectations at the beginning of the school year and periodically throughout the year.
- Foster communication between families and school, informing families of both their student's positive behavior and of behavior-related concerns. Communication must be adequate, timely, and culturally appropriate. Schools must make reasonable efforts to communicate with families in a language they understand.
- Ensure that the school is welcoming to families of all cultures and backgrounds.
- Provide a continuum of interventions that include reinforcement, support and re-teaching opportunities as well as consequences for misbehavior in order to address the needs of the student who misbehaved, those people directly affected by the behavior, and the school community as a whole.
- Document behavior concerns, removals, and interventions used by individual staff and the school as a whole and their impact.
- Identify and use a process for resolving conflict.
- Involve students and families in problem solving for individual concerns.
- Solicit input from students and families about school climate and other concerns. Invite students and families to be involved in problem solving.

Students are entitled to:

- Quality education.
- A safe and orderly learning environment.
- Have their culture and family be treated with respect.
- Equal access to classes, services and extracurricular activities.
- Equal treatment in the enforcement of school rules and due process.
- Safeguarding of constitutional and other legal rights.
- Confidentiality in handling of their records.
- A grievance process as described in this handbook.
- Get help in the classroom and in the school as a whole.

Students are expected to:

- Take responsibility for their learning and behavior.
- Hold themselves to high standards of achievement and conduct.
- Come to school every day, on time, ready to learn.
- Dress in a manner appropriate to a professional learning community.
- Follow school and classroom expectations and rules.
- Not carry electronic communication devices at school. These include, but are not limited, to pagers and cell phones.
- Participate as members of the learning community.
- Treat teachers, administrators, staff, other students, themselves and property with respect.
- Help teachers and other students understand their culture and learn about and be respectful of the cultures of others.
- Comply with reasonable requests from school staff.
- Model positive behavior.
- Reinforce learning through homework or tutoring as needed.
- Talk to their families about school expectations and what they are learning in school, including sharing feedback on their progress (grades, etc.).
- Participate in problem solving for individual and school concerns.
- Report serious violations of safety and security to a teacher or other adult at school.

Families are entitled to:

- Be treated with courtesy and respect.
- Have their culture valued and respected.
- Receive school reports and information in a timely manner.
- Be informed of their child's academic progress, attendance and behavior concerns.
- Be included in problem solving discussions about their child.
- Schedule conferences with teachers, principals and other school staff.
- Arrange with school authorities to review their child's school record.
- Bring complaints to the attention of school authorities.

Families are expected to:

- Take responsibility for the behavior of their student as determined by law, community practice and school expectations.
- Hold their student to high standards of achievement and conduct.
- Participate in and support school activities.
- Help their student, teachers and other students understand their culture and learn about other cultures.
- Teach their student to be respectful of others and reinforce school expectations.
- Model positive, respectful and appropriate school behavior, by treating school personnel and others with respect.
- Teach their student that behavior has consequences.
- Encourage and praise their student's achievements.
- Communicate with school staff to ensure that staff know and understand their student better and are better able to teach them effectively.
- Discuss feedback on progress with their student.
- Participate in problem solving about their student and the school.

Teachers are entitled to:

- Teach in a safe, orderly environment.
- Receive the cooperation of students and families.
- Receive support and cooperation of all school personnel.

Teachers are expected to:

- Use the Standards of Effective Instruction as a guide for reflection and improvement.
- Follow the Professional Ethics outlined in the Teachers' Contract.
- Collaborate with their team and the full staff in developing and implementing school and classroom plans.
- Establish a sense of community in the classroom, including opportunities for members of the school community to learn about and be respectful of each other's cultures.
- Maintain high behavior standards for all students.
- Model professional standards of behavior, including ensuring that interaction with students is respectful and caring.
- Teach expectations early and review them with students throughout the school year; including an orientation process for new students.
- Engage students in defining classroom specific expectations and rules that elaborate on the District and school expectations.
- Communicate regularly with the families of their students.
- Dress in a manner appropriate to a professional learning community.
- Implement interventions that address the needs of the student who misbehaved, those people directly affected by the behavior, and the school community.
- Identify students who are struggling with academic, attendance and behavior issues and participate in problem solving to resolve those issues.

Principals are entitled to:

- Work in an orderly and safe environment.
- Direction and support from central administration.
- Receive cooperation of all students and parents/guardians.
- Receive the cooperation and support of school staff in serving as the school's educational leader.

Principals are expected to:

- Provide leadership to ensure the full implementation of the school-wide behavior plan that is aligned with the MPS discipline framework.
- Ensure that school staff, students and families know how to bring forward concerns and suggestions and that a process exists for responding to them.
- Implement strategies to ensure a sense of shared leadership and community among school staff.
- Provide leadership to focus on cultural competence and to address racism among students and staff to ensure a culture of acceptance of the diversity within the school
- Maintain high expectations for all students.
- Model positive behavior, including practicing fairness and equity.
- Dress in a manner appropriate to a professional learning community.
- Provide positive feedback to students and staff and consult with families of students who are conducting themselves in a manner contrary to the policy and school expectations.
- Provide leadership to ensure effective interdisciplinary consultation and support, including identification and removal of barriers to effective problem solving.
- Ensure that the school effectively monitors and analyzes behavior data, including accurate entry of data.
- Disseminate information about students to teachers as per the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers' contract.
- Notify Safety and Security of all serious safety incidents.

Infractions and Consequences

Misbehavior in school disrupts teaching and learning and may cause injury to the individual who is misbehaving or others, damage property, or violate school rules or civil law. Misbehavior ranges from very minor to very serious infractions. Similar misbehavior may have different causes in different situations. Therefore, schools must use a wide range of responses to misbehavior to help students learn appropriate behavior, avoid repetition of similar incidents by the student(s) involved or others, and maintain a safe learning environment.

Listed below are misbehaviors that are so serious that a student must be removed from school to maintain a safe and orderly learning environment. There are seven (7) sets of misbehavior that will always result in suspension, except for students with disabilities who will be dealt with pursuant to regulation 5200C. It is expected that whenever a student is suspended, other interventions will be used as well. Other misbehaviors may result in suspension, depending on the severity of the incident.

In addition, MPS has identified three (3) misbehaviors that will result in referral for expulsion and five (5) misbehaviors that may result in a referral for expulsion. Principals may also refer a student for administrative transfer based on the severity of the incident and the grade level of the student.

| Mandatory Suspension | Definite Referral for Expulsion | Possible Referral for Expulsion | Possible Referral for Administrative Transfer |
|--|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weapons ▪ Assault ▪ Fighting ▪ Alcohol / Other drugs: possession, use and / or sale ▪ Bomb or terroristic threat | Grade 6-12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weapons ▪ Assault ▪ Sale of alcohol or other drugs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bomb or terroristic threat ▪ Harassment ▪ Property offenses ▪ Other safety violations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bomb or terroristic threat ▪ Bullying ▪ Harassment ▪ Other safety violations Grades K-5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weapons ▪ Assault ▪ Sale of alcohol or other drugs |

Minneapolis Public Schools complies with the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act regarding procedures for suspensions, expulsion and other discipline acts. A summary of The Pupil Fair Dismissal Act is included in the appendix of this handbook, beginning on page 27.

Whenever a student is referred for expulsion, he/she will be given a five (5) day suspension, which can be extended up to ten (10) days for special education students and for up to fifteen (15) days for general education students.

The following page presents a chart summarizing consequences for misbehaviors, including suspension, referral for transfer, expulsion and/or to the police, followed by a narrative description of the misbehaviors and their consequences. The next section provides guidelines about other interventions.

MPS recognizes that situations may arise that are not covered by these policies and procedures. MPS trusts the leadership of each school to make sound judgments in the best interest of individual students and the school as a whole. The principal retains the right to take appropriate action to ensure the safety of the school, its students and staff and to provide interventions and consequences that will help misbehaving students learn appropriate behavior. It is the principal's responsibility to seek other options and to use suspension judiciously in order to maximize the amount of time students are safely and productively in class.

Consequences for Misbehavior

| MANDATORY SUSPENSIONS | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|------|-------------------|------|--------------------|------|
| Category | Description | Intervention plus suspension | | Police Referral | | Rec. for Transfer | | Rec. for Expulsion | |
| | | K-5 | 6-12 | K-5 | 6-12 | K-5 | 6-12 | K-5 | 6-12 |
| Weapons | | 1-5 days | 5 days | May | Yes | May | Yes | May | Yes |
| Assault | Physical; sexual | 1-5 days | 5 days | May | Yes | May | Yes | May | Yes |
| Fighting | | 1-3 days | 3 days | No | May | | | | |
| Alcohol and other drugs: possession and / use | First offense Repeat offense | 1 day 1 day | 3 days 5 days | May | May | | | | |
| Bomb/terroristic threats | | 1-5 days | 5 days | May | May | May | May | May | May |
| Sale of alcohol or other drugs | | 5 days | 5 days | Yes | Yes | May | Yes | May | Yes |
| GUIDELINES FOR OTHER OFFENSES | | | | | | | | | |
| Threats | Threats; Extortion | Intervention plus 0-5 days | | May | May | May | May | May | May |
| Physical aggression | Pushing, poking, shoving, scuffling; unfriendly touch, biting, spitting, hazing | Intervention plus 0- 2 days | | | | | | | |
| Bullying | Intentional infliction of, or attempt to inflict injury or discomfort | Intervention plus 0-2 days | | | | | May | | |
| Defiance | Defiance; failure to comply with request or direction from an adult; persistent lack of cooperation | Intervention plus 0-3 days | | | | | | | |
| Verbal abuse/disrespect | Disrespect to adult or student; gestures of disobedience | Intervention plus 0-3 days | | | | | | | |
| Harassment | Sexual, racial, cultural, religious, disability | Intervention plus 3 days | | May | May | May | May | May | May |
| Tobacco | First offense | Intervention plus 0-1 day | | May | May | | | | |
| | Repeat offense | Intervention plus 0-5 days | | May | May | | | | |
| Property offenses | Vandalism; theft; possession of stolen property; unauthorized use of school equipment | Intervention plus 0--5 days | | May | May | | | May | May |
| Trespassing | | Intervention plus 0-5 days | | May | May | | | | |
| Fire alarms | | Intervention plus 0-2 days | | May | May | | | | |
| Other safety violations | Willful neglect of safety of self or others; fireworks, stink-bombs | Intervention plus 0-5 days | | May | May | May | May | May | May |
| Bus discipline | When suspension is given, misbehavior coded by categories above. Days transportation privileges denied determined by principal. | | | | | | | | |
| Other | As deemed necessary by school administrator | Intervention plus 0-5 days | | | | | | | |

Offenses with Mandatory Suspensions

Weapons

No weapons are allowed on school grounds, except those carried by a police officer. "Weapon" means any firearm, whether loaded or unloaded, any device or instrument designed as a weapon or through its use capable of threatening or producing great bodily harm or death, or any device or instrument that is used to threaten or cause bodily harm or death and combustible or flammable liquids. Some examples of weapons are: guns (including pellet guns, look-alike guns and non-functioning guns that could be used to threaten others), knives, clubs, metal knuckles, numchucks, throwing stars, explosives, stun guns, ammunition, and mace. A student who unknowingly brings a weapon to school and turns it into school staff immediately shall not be considered in possession of a weapon. A student who finds a weapon should report it immediately to school staff.

Although mace is considered a weapon under this policy, parents/guardians of a student may make special arrangements with the building principal if a student needs to carry mace for defensive purposes outside the school setting. Such arrangements shall be made in advance for the student to check the mace into the school office during the time the student is in the building.

Possession of a weapon will result in the following consequences:

- The weapon will be confiscated and the police liaison officer will be notified.
- Students in grades K-5 will receive an initial suspension from the classroom or the school for a period of one (1) to three (3) days. The student may be recommended to the Superintendent for transfer or expulsion, depending on the circumstances surrounding the offense.
- Students in grades 6-12 will be suspended from school for five (5) days. The student will be recommended to the Superintendent for expulsion.
- When a student is recommended for expulsion, all information will be forwarded to the Office of Hearing and Appeals for evaluation and/or disposition. The Superintendent and/or his/her designee shall determine if expulsion proceedings shall be undertaken and shall make a recommendation to the Board of Education if expulsion is warranted.

Please take notice that all violations of this weapons policy must be referred to the police. Students found in possession of any dangerous weapon on school grounds may be subject to felony charges pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 609.02, Subd. 1(a).

Assault

Assault is a direct attack on another person and includes either physical and/or sexual attacks. Assault will result in the following consequences:

- Students in grades K-5 will receive a one (1) to five (5) day suspension and may be referred to the police and may be administratively transferred to another educational setting. Administrative transfer does not ensure the same program choice.
- Students in grades 6-12 will be initially suspended for five (5) days. The student may be administratively transferred to another educational setting or may be recommended for expulsion. A second offense will result in a recommendation for expulsion. The student will be referred to the police.

Direct attack with a weapon: Direct attack with a weapon shall be dealt with under the preceding section of this policy dealing with "weapons".

Fighting

Fighting is aggressive behavior by two or more individuals. Fighting will result in the following consequences:

- Students in grades K-5 will be suspended from the classroom or from the school for a period of one (1) to three (3) days.
- Students in grades 6-12 will be suspended from school for three (3) days.

Alcohol And Other Drugs (Note: Tobacco addressed in next section)

Possession and/or use of alcohol, controlled substances, mood-altering substances, or misuse of prescription drugs will result in the following consequences:

- In all instances, a conference with the parent/guardian will be conducted and, as appropriate, a referral to the multidisciplinary chemical awareness team.
- Grades K-5 students will receive a one (1) day suspension, with in-school suspension recommended.
- Grades 6-12 students will receive:
 - A three (3) day suspension out of school for a first offense.
 - A five (5) day suspension out of school for repeat offenses.

Sale or attempted sale of alcohol, controlled substances, mood altering substances or prescription drugs will result in a suspension out of school for five (5) days and police referral. The principal may recommend for transfer or expulsion.

Bomb And Terroristic Threats

Whoever threatens, directly or indirectly, to commit any crime of violence with the purpose to terrorize another or to cause evacuation of a school or a part of a school, or school vehicle or otherwise cause serious public inconvenience, or in a reckless disregard of the risk of causing such terror or inconvenience will be suspended from school. Students in grades K-5 will be suspended for one (1) to five (5) days. Students in grades 6-12 will be suspended for five (5) days. In addition, students in grades 6-12 may be recommended for transfer or expulsion.

Other Misbehavior

Threats

A threat of bodily harm or death to another person, persons or the school as a whole without material physical contact, will result in a parent/guardian conference and may result in an initial suspension of up to five (5) days and may result in the student being transferred to another school. Continued threat to other students may result in a recommendation for expulsion.

Harassment

The School District will investigate all allegations of sexual (including sexual orientation and affectional preference), ethnic/racial harassment and harassment based on religious beliefs or practices and disability

harassment and discrimination. Behavior that fits the legal definition of harassment will be referred to the judicial process. For behaviors that do not constitute illegal harassment or violence but are nonetheless inappropriate, the following consequences may be applied:

- Grades K-5 students may be suspended from the classroom or the school for one (1) to three (3) days.
- Grades 6-12 students may be suspended from school for one (1) to five (5) days.

Additional interventions may include a parent conference, involvement of school support staff, psychological evaluation and/or police referral and recommendation for expulsion or administrative transfer. See Policy 4002 - Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence and the *Toolbox for Implementing the Policy Against Sexual, Religious and Racial Harassment and Violence* from the MPS Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity for further guidance.

Bullying

Bullying is the repeated exposure, over time, to negative actions that may include, but are not limited to, the intentional infliction of, or attempt to inflict injury or discomfort. Bullying behavior may include verbal abuse such as teasing, threatening or taunting, or non-verbal behavior such as making faces or gestures, or deliberately excluding someone, or physically aggressive behaviors. Bullying is never okay and school staff is expected to intervene in all cases. Bullying may result in a suspension of up to (2) days.

Physical Aggression

Students may be suspended for up to two (2) days for physical aggression such as poking, pushing, shoving or scuffling, unfriendly touch, biting, spitting, and hazing that is disruptive to the school.

Use Of Tobacco

Use of tobacco within a school building, on school property, in school leased or owned vehicles and at school-sponsored events off campus is prohibited according to Policy #4020.

Students using tobacco in the school building or in a school vehicle may be suspended for one (1) day. Whether or not a student is suspended, the parents/guardians will be notified and the student will be referred to the multidisciplinary chemical awareness team. Progressive discipline may be imposed for repeat offenses of up to five (5) days suspension.

Defiance, Persistent Lack of Cooperation

Students may be suspended for defiance, persistent lack of cooperation, or failure to comply with a request or direction from an adult. Students may be suspended for up to three (3) days.

Verbal Abuse and Disrespect of School Staff and Students

This conduct includes, but is not limited to, refusing to comply with reasonable requests from school authorities; directing profanity and verbal abuse toward adults and/or students; and displaying behavior which is intended to be demeaning, derogatory or confrontational. Some examples include refusing to follow instructions, name-calling, vulgar gestures, racial epithets, refusing to correctly identify oneself, etc.

A student may be suspended for up to three (3) days.

School Property Damage, Personal Theft, Vandalism, Arson, Extortion, Locker Break-Ins

Students in grades K-5 may be suspended for up to five (5) days. The student may be referred to the police or arson squad and will be held responsible for payment of damages or as determined by the court and may be recommended for expulsion.

Improper Activation of Fire Alarms

Students may be suspended for up to two (2) days, and shall be referred to the fire marshal and police liaison officer.

Trespassing (Unauthorized Presence)

Students with an unauthorized absence from their home school, found present without permission at another Minneapolis Public School or on Minneapolis school property, may be suspended. Students may be suspended for up to five (5) days. Students may be referred to the police.

Bus Discipline

Students riding school busses or waiting at school bus stops are subject to provisions of the Citywide Discipline Policy. Violations result in discipline as provided for by the Citywide Discipline Policy, including suspension, expulsion, and/or exclusion.

Breaking of school district bus rules may result in the denial of transportation privileges upon notification of the parent/guardian. The principal, in consultation with the Transportation Department, will determine the length of time transportation privileges are denied. In all cases, families will be contacted prior to the denial of transportation privileges.

Other Safety Violations

Students may be suspended for other safety violations. Such violations include willful neglect of their own safety or the safety of others, and possession of fireworks or stink bombs. Students in K-5 may be suspended for up to five (5) days and, if the offense is serious enough, may be referred to the police and/or for transfer or expulsion.

Tardiness And Truancy

Tardiness, unauthorized absences and truancy are addressed in the attendance policies and procedures. Students may not be suspended for tardiness or unexcused absences.

Interventions for Student Misbehavior

The MPS system of discipline is built on personal accountability, which is understood to mean:

- Recognition that misbehavior damages relationships between the person or persons who misbehaved, the person harmed by the behavior, and the community as a whole.
- Having an opportunity to repair harm done and restore relationships whenever possible, as opposed to removal.
- Building personal responsibility by helping individuals develop internal control and motivation.
- Maintaining boundaries/limits that preserve the safety and integrity of individuals and the community.

Criteria for Choosing Interventions

Interventions and consequences due to misbehavior should minimize the interruption of a student's educational program. When choosing consequences, the staff should consider the following factors:

- Balance overall school safety, providing consequences and offering help/support to the student and support to staff;
- Age and grade level of student;
- Degree of harm;
- Disability/special education status (see procedures for suspending students with disabilities);
- Whether the incident is a first offense or a repeat offense;
- The impact of the incident on the overall school community;
- The willingness and ability of the student to repair the harm done.
- If an Individual Behavior Intervention Plan exists, signed by case manager and developed with the student, family and school staff, it may supersede the Citywide Discipline Policy and Procedures outlined below.

Continuum of Interventions

The following list is a sampling of some interventions that may be used:

- Reminders and redirection
- Re-teaching expectations and skills
- Modifications to instruction
- Student–teacher conference
- Principal conference
- Family conference/phone contact
- Behavior contract
- Detention
- In-school monitoring
- Referral to school-based support service (e.g. social worker, counselor, etc.)
- Class or group related to the offense (e.g. tobacco education, chemical awareness, anger management)
- Link to community based services
- Temporary removal from class
- Restitution
- Circle of Repair with student and others affected by the incident
- Dismissal from school
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Transfer to another school
- Expulsion

The following table describes points in time when interventions take place, based on state and federal law and MPS best practice guidelines.

Continuum of Interventions and Corrective Actions

| | |
|---|--|
| Proactive Approaches | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish caring relationships with students and families. ▪ Build community in the school and in each classroom. ▪ Teach expectations. ▪ Engage students in quality instruction. |
| Ongoing Record Keeping | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete Classroom Organizer and Behavior Screener. ▪ Record all behavior referrals and removals. |
| Classroom Modifications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teachers make modifications in instruction and classroom management to meet the needs of individual students and groups of students. |
| School Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students may receive out of classroom, in school, interventions including, but not limited to social worker services, Circles for Repair, opportunities for restitution, peer mediation, time outs, and Alternative Instruction. |
| Community Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students may be linked to community services such as support groups. |
| Problem Solving Team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Each school has a multi-disciplinary team to do problem solving and design interventions for struggling students. |
| Five Day Rule | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When a five-day suspension is given, a re-admittance and Individual Behavior Intervention Plan or an alternate placement plan for the student should be developed during the suspension. ▪ When a student with an IEP has been suspended for five (5) consecutive days, the special education team must meet within ten (10) days to determine if the behavior that resulted in a suspension is a result/manifestation of the disability. |
| Six day rule | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If a student is suspended for six (6) or more consecutive days, the school must provide alternative educational services. |
| Ten Removal Rule | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When a student has been removed ten (10) times, a problem-solving meeting must be held and staff must discuss the possibility of a mental health screening with the family. ▪ The student may also be referred to the Office of Hearings and Appeals. |
| Suspensions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students may be suspended for up to ten (10) days for the behaviors identified in this handbook. |
| Referral to Office of Hearings and Appeals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students who have had three (3) mandatory suspensions that do not move directly to referral for expulsion |
| Referral for Administrative Transfer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A principal may refer a student for an administrative transfer to another school following an incident that is severe enough to generate a police report. |
| Referral for Expulsion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students may be referred for expulsion for assault, possession of a weapon, sale of alcohol or drugs or other criminal activity. |

Grievance Procedure

The Minneapolis Federation of Teachers Local 59 and the Minneapolis Public Schools, Board of Education, want to insure that communication between parents/guardians, community members and teachers is of benefit to the students of the District, while protecting the rights of teachers and encouraging parent and community member participation. To facilitate the achievement of this goal, the following procedures should be followed when community members or parents/guardians wish to make a formal complaint about a teacher. The procedures should insure a fair and speedy resolution of the concern.

The parent or community member will inform the principal of his/her concern. The following steps must be followed to make a formal complaint:

- Notice will be given to the principal and the teacher concerning the proposed conference, citing specific concerns and listing the names of the parents/guardians or other visitors who wish to attend.
- The teacher will confirm the appointment with the concerned party or parties. The teacher may choose to have a representative present at the conference.
- If the complaint is not resolved at the conference, the principal will request that the parent or community member make the complaint in writing by filling out the form: Citizen's Complaint: Teacher Personnel. If the form is not completed, a report of the complaint should be made to the appropriate Associate Superintendent.
- Any complaint remaining unresolved after the local-level review may be forwarded to the Superintendent of Schools or a designee for further action. A meeting will be scheduled for the purpose of reviewing the facts, making further explanations and clarifying the issues. It is understood that the teacher may have a representative from Local 59 or legal representation or whomever the teacher selects as a representative.
- The Superintendent or designee shall fix the date at which time a decision will be rendered. Disposition of the complaint will be within 30 days of the filing of the complaint.

Complaints against school administrators will follow the same protocol, except that the initial complaint will be made to the appropriate Associate Superintendent.

Tools for Success: Services and Resources

The District provides a wide range of resources to support staff, students and families.

Safety

Minneapolis Public Schools takes many steps to assure that our schools remain safe places.

- **Identification badges:** Students in all middle and high schools receive identification badges and are asked to wear them at school and at all school sponsored activities. Students in K-5 and K-8 schools may receive badges. Staff also have badges and are expected to wear them. The badges help maintain safety by helping to identify who belongs in our schools. Some schools use the badges as library cards and for other purposes as well.
- **Visitors:** Visitors are welcome in our schools. We encourage families to visit school programs and student activities. However, it is important that visitors, too, receive and wear identification badges. When you visit one of our schools, please sign in at the reception desk or school office and wear the visitor badge you will receive at that time. We reserve the right to deny or revoke permission to visit to individuals or groups who do not comply with school district procedures or if the visit is not in the best interest of students, staff or the school district. A visitor that does not comply with school policies and procedures may be guilty of criminal trespass and school personnel will call (9) 911 and request an immediate police response.
- **Technology:** Technology has become an important tool for learning. MPS has adopted Policy 6415 to ensure the safe and appropriate use of the Internet. Students and staff may use the Internet to participate in distance learning activities, to ask questions of and consult with experts, to communicate with other students and teachers, and to locate resources to meet their educational and personal information needs. The District has established guidelines for appropriate use of technology, including the Internet.

Students, staff and parents/guardians are advised that some network sites may contain inappropriate or offensive material. School administrators and staff do not condone the use of such materials and do not permit usage of those materials in the school environment. Students and staff who knowingly use such materials in school will be dealt with according to the discipline policies of the District and the individual school. The school principal and district administrators have the right to terminate the access privileges of any student or staff who violates the guidelines.

Video Cameras: The District authorizes the use of video cameras on school property and transportation vehicles to ensure the safety of all staff, students, visitors, and property. The cameras may be used in locations deemed appropriate by the Superintendent of Schools, as allowable by state and federal laws. Video recordings may become a part of a student's educational record. The District will comply with all applicable state and federal laws related to record maintenance and retention.

Support Services

Teacher and Instructional Services provides support for implementation of standards based curriculum and best practice instructional strategies.

The **Office of Safety and Security** works proactively with administrators, staff, students and families to create and maintain a safe environment in our schools.

Health Related Services (HRS) addresses the social, emotional and physical health needs of students through , social work, psychological, counseling, and nursing services including support services for Homeless and Highly Mobile Students and citywide coordination of Teenage Pregnant and Parenting Programs (TAPPP). **Out 4 Good** focuses on creating safe and supportive schools for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender students, families, teachers and staff in Minneapolis Public Schools.

Student Placement Services assists families in identifying a school that meets the educational needs of their students. **The New Family Center is part of Student Placement Services with a specific focus on assisting** families who do not speak English.

The **Alternative Schools Office** links students to alternative educational programs, including smaller learning environments, culturally specific programming and opportunities to make up credits for graduation.

The **Hearings and Appeals Office** manages referrals for transfer and expulsion.

The **Area Superintendents' Offices** provide support for schools

The **Ombudsman Office** responds to questions and concerns from families.

The **Attendance Office** provides support for implementation of the District attendance policies and procedures. The **Student Attendance Review Board (SARB)** provides interventions for truant students.

Student Accounting provides Support for the Discovery Data System including training and support for data entry, retrieval and analysis.

Related Policies

Assuring a Safe, Respectful Learning Environment

The Minneapolis Public Schools are committed to teaching, learning and academic achievement for all students. To achieve this goal we must have safe, orderly, well managed learning environments. Minneapolis Public Schools expects all students to be active learners and responsible members of their learning community. District staff, school administrators, teachers, other school staff, students and families share responsibility for developing and maintaining learning environments in which everyone is:

- Safe
- Respectful
- Responsible
- Learning, and
- Treated with dignity, and kindness.

Each member of the community has the right to be treated with respect, dignity, and kindness and has the corresponding responsibility to respectfully support the safety and learning of others in schools and the community.

High Expectations and Open Opportunities for All Students and Families

The Minneapolis Public Schools, through the **Diversity and Equity Policy**, has affirmed that learning and work environments are enriched and improved by the presence, contributions, and perspectives of diverse participants. Learning environments must welcome, respect and value diversity. The Minneapolis Public Schools **Non-discrimination Policy** bans discrimination based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability or age in its programs and activities. In addition, the District ensures that children and youth who are homeless or highly mobile have opportunities to achieve the same high academic standards as students who are not homeless or highly mobile.

This means that all children, youth and their families are welcome and encouraged to participate in the full range of opportunities at the district, including academic classes, school sponsored organizations, clubs, and activities, athletics and after school programs. The only limits to participation will be those reasonably related to the activity. See Tools for Success, beginning on page20, to learn where you can get help if you have individual needs in any of these areas.

Data Privacy

The records that the District maintains in its files, which identify students or discuss students' needs or accomplishments, are private data. This means that members of the public and District employees whose duties do not require that they have access to this information may not see these records unless you or your parents/guardians give consent or a law or a court order authorizes access.

Certain kinds of information have been categorized by the District as directory information. Directory information, even though it identifies you, can be released to the public. In Minneapolis, directory information consists of the following:

- a. Name, height and weight of individual members of athletic teams;
- b. Name of recipient and name of awarded scholarship;
- c. Names of our participants in officially recognized school activities;
- d. The names of students receiving recognition by their teachers, buildings, district administration or the School Board as the result of positive accomplishments for academic achievement, good citizenship, and adherence to the standards of conduct of the Minneapolis Public Schools as well as a description of the accomplishment, grade, achievement and/or award.

Students or families may notify the building principal if they do not want directory information about them to be made public, and the request will be honored.

If an emergency occurs and knowledge of the information is necessary to protect your health and safety or that of other individuals, the school can release information about a student to appropriate parties, i.e. a hospital, police department or emergency squad.

In the event that a student transfers to or applies for admission in another school, including post-secondary schools, the District will transfer your records to that school if it receives a request to do so.

The District will release the names, addresses, and home telephone numbers of students in grades 11 and 12 to military recruiting officers unless a student's parents/guardians/notify the building principal that the information should not be released.

The District will bill health care providers for health care services required in an Individual Education Plan (IEP) if you have an IEP.

Freedom from Unreasonable Searches and Seizures

School officials may search students for items that may be harmful to themselves or to others and to detect items that are prohibited from being on school grounds or other places under supervision of school personnel, i.e. busses, field trips. Consent of the student is not required prior to the search. Except for lockers and desks, all searches will be based upon reasonable suspicion that items that may be harmful to the student or others or that items that are prohibited from being on school grounds may be found.

Student searches must be authorized and conducted by principals and/or their designees or by police liaison officers at the express request of the principal or their designee in their presence. One additional staff member must be present during a search of a student.

Student lockers and school desks are school property and remain at all times under the control of the school; however, students are expected to assume full responsibility for the security of their lockers. School authorities for any reason may conduct periodic general inspections of lockers at any time without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant.

Searches of students may consist of requesting a student to empty the contents of pockets, purses and other accessories, and a pat down of the exterior clothing. Strip searches of students are expressly prohibited. Use of dogs to sniff search groups of students is expressly prohibited as are blanket searches of groups of students in the absence of reasonable suspicion that a group of students may be in possession of items that are harmful to themselves or others or items that are prohibited from being on school grounds.

Electronic metal detectors may be used to prevent weapons and other contraband from being brought into MPS facilities.

Student Rights During Investigations

Schools have an obligation to cooperate with police officers in law enforcement and crime prevention. The schools also have an obligation to protect the legal rights of children who are in their charge.

Police may be called to the schools or utilized by the schools at the request of the school administration. If an on-duty police officer wishes to come to the school for official business, they first must contact the school administration.

The police have ample opportunity to talk to students away from the school and before or after school hours. They should be encouraged to do so. Law enforcement authorities should only be allowed to conduct an interview in the school if they can show that special circumstances exist or if the interview is to be conducted at the request of the school.

Throughout this process, all attempts should be made to avoid embarrassing the student before teachers and peers and to avoid disrupting the educational program of the student and the school.

Policy Against Harassment and Violence

Everyone in the Minneapolis School District has a right to feel respected and safe and therefore, MPS has a policy against harassment and violence.

A harasser may be a student or an adult. Harassment may include the following when related to religion, race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability or age:

- a. Name calling, jokes or rumors;
- b. Pulling on clothing;
- c. Graffiti;
- d. Notes or cartoons;
- e. Unwelcome touching of a person or clothing;
- f. Offensive or graphic posters, book covers; or
- g. Any words or actions that make you feel uncomfortable, embarrass you, hurt your feelings or make you feel bad.

If any words or actions make a student feel uncomfortable or fearful, the student can tell a teacher, counselor, the principal, an assistant principal, school social worker, or the District's Equal Opportunity Officer. The District also will take action if anyone tries to intimidate or take action to harm someone because they have reported.

Discrimination is against the law. Harassment and violence will not be tolerated.

Investigations of Suspected Child Abuse / Neglect

State law mandates that school personnel report alleged physical/sexual abuse and/or neglect by individuals, regardless of whether these individuals are District employees or guardians/family members. Reports of alleged physical/sexual abuse and/or neglect will be made to the local welfare agency, police department or the county sheriff.

An employer of any person required to report suspected child physical/sexual abuse and/or neglect shall not retaliate against the person for reporting in good faith abuse or neglect, or against a child with respect to whom a report is made, because of the report.

Employees who know or have reason to believe that a child has been maltreated may consult with administrators, school social workers, Student Support Services, or the District General Counsel's Office regarding the procedures to be followed in making such a suspected maltreatment report. However, such consultations do not alter the employee's reporting obligations. Each employee retains the independent responsibility of determining whether a report should be made and ensuring that a report is made when he or she feels that it is necessary.

School staff must gather only enough facts to: 1) determine whether there is knowledge of, or reasonable cause to believe that abuse occurred; 2) provide enough information to enable the investigative agency to initiate an investigation (a single report of an incident by a student or parent may be enough information on which to find reasonable cause); and 3) determine the appropriate status of the identified employee prior to and during the investigation of charges filed.

Definition of Reasonable Force

The law says "reasonable force may be used upon or toward a student by a parent, legal guardian, teacher, or other caretaker, in the exercise of lawful authority to restrain a student." Reasonable force is merely to restrain someone for his/her own benefit or for the sake of others and is not punitive. The degree of restraint used and the restraining actions must be consistent with the needs of the situation. Use of restraint will most often involve contact with arms, hands, or legs.

The degree of restraint used and the restraining actions must be consistent with the needs of the situation. While reasonable force against a child may be used as described above, corporal punishment shall not be inflicted or caused to be inflicted by an employee or agent of a public school against a student to reform or penalize unacceptable conduct. Corporal punishment is conduct involving hitting or spanking a person with or without an object or using unreasonable physical force that causes bodily harm or substantial emotional harm. A violation of the corporal punishment statute is not a misdemeanor, but may constitute another crime if it violates an existing criminal statute.

Grievance Procedures for Complaints involving Civil Rights, Illegal Discrimination and/or Harassment

The Minneapolis Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability or age in its programs and activities. MPS does not tolerate violence or harassment.

Students may report harassment or discrimination to a teacher, counselor, the principal, an assistant principal, school social worker or the District's Equal Opportunity Officer. Reports may be made verbally or in writing.

All reports of harassment, violence or discrimination will be taken seriously and the District will take appropriate actions based on the report. The reporter's privacy will be respected as much as possible.

The District also will take action if anyone tries to intimidate or harm someone as a result of having made a report.

The following department has been designated to handle inquiries regarding policies of non-discrimination, harassment and violence:

Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity
807 Northeast Broadway
Minneapolis, MN 55413-2398
Telephone: (612) 668-0518

The Minneapolis Public Schools shall comply with all relevant federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination. Specific District policies and procedures regarding non-discrimination can be obtained from the Director of Diversity and Equal Opportunity.

The Section 504 Coordinator for Minneapolis Public Schools is:

Assistant District General Counsel
807 Northeast Broadway
Minneapolis, MN 55413-2398
Telephone: (612) 668-0484

Summary of THE PUPIL FAIR DISMISSAL ACT

The State of Minnesota has a law called The Pupil Fair Dismissal Act. This law describes when a student can legally be dismissed from school and what rights the student has when dismissed. The following is a brief summary of the law.

Definitions: According to the law, **dismissal** means the student is denied his/her current educational program and includes exclusions, expulsions and suspensions. A **suspension** is when the school administration prohibits a student from attending school for a period of more than one (1) school day but no more than ten (10) school days. **Removals** from school for one (1) school day or less are not legally defined suspensions but may trigger other legal requirements. **Expulsion** means a school board action that prohibits an enrolled student from continuing to attend a district school for up to twelve (12) months from the date the student is expelled. **Exclusion** means an action taken by the school board that prevents a student from enrolling or re-enrolling in the school district for the remainder of the school year.

Grounds for Suspension: A student may be **suspended** for:

- Willful violation of any reasonable school board regulation, *or*
- Willful conduct that significantly disrupts the rights of others to an education or prevents school personnel from performing their duties, *or*
- Willful conduct that endangers the student, others or school property.

Informal Conference: Unless there is an immediate danger to the student, others or school property, the school administrator must hold an informal conference with the student prior to suspending the student. At the conference the student must be:

- Told the reason for the suspension,
- Presented with an explanation of any evidence on which the suspension is based, and
- Given an opportunity to tell his/her own version of the facts.

Written Notice of Suspension: The student must also be given a written notice that states the grounds for the suspension, a brief statement of the facts and testimony on which the suspension is based, a readmission plan, and a copy of the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act. This written notice must also be mailed to the student's parents/guardians within 48 hours of the informal conference or, if no conference was held, of the start of the suspension. The school must try to phone the parents/guardians about the suspension as soon as possible after the suspension.

Alternative Educational Services: If the suspension is for six (6) or more school days, the school must set up alternative educational services for the student beginning on day 6.

Readmission Plan: The school may require a readmission plan for the student. Failure to follow the plan *cannot* be used to lengthen the suspension. The plan also cannot require parents/guardians to provide sympathomimetic medication for their child as a condition of readmission.

Extending a Suspension: The school may *not* extend a suspension for the same incident, *except*:

- When there has been a recommendation for expulsion. When the school makes a recommendation for expulsion, the suspension may be extended for up to fifteen (15) school days or for up to ten (10) school days for students with a disability, or

- When the student will create an immediate and substantial danger to self, others, or property.

More than Ten Days of Removal: If a student is removed for more than ten school days in one school year, the school must make reasonable attempts to set up a meeting with the student and the student's parents/guardians before any further removals are given. The purpose of the meeting is to determine: (1) the student's need for assessment or other services, and (2) whether the parent should have the student assessed or diagnosed to determine if the student needs treatment for a mental health disorder. Though the school may assist the parent with setting up a mental health screening for the student, the school district is not required to pay for or do the screening.

Failure to Return to School: Whenever a student fails to return to school within ten (10) school days of the termination of suspension, a school administrator shall inform the student and his/her parents/guardians by mail of the student's right to return to the public school.

Students with a Disability: When a student has an Individual Education Program (IEP) *and*

- The student is removed for five (5) or more school days in a row, or
- The student is removed for more than ten (10) school days in one school year, or
- The parent requests an IEP team meeting then the student's IEP team must meet within ten (10) school days of the removal to determine if there is a relationship between the student's disability and the conduct that resulted in the removal. A Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) may also need to be developed depending on the total number of days the student has been removed from school thus far that school year. These requirements may also apply to students with a suspected disability if they are determined to be eligible for special education services.

Grounds for Expulsion or Exclusion: A student may be **expelled** or **excluded** for:

- Willful violation of any reasonable school board regulation, *or*
- Willful conduct that significantly disrupts the rights of others to an education or prevents school personnel from performing their duties, *or*
- Willful conduct that endangers the student, others or school property.

When a Recommendations for Expulsion or Exclusion is Made: When a school recommends to expel or exclude a student and that student is currently on suspension, that suspension may be extended up to fifteen (15) days, ten (10) days for special education students, provided that alternative educational services are provided to the student by the school beginning on day 6 of the suspension. These services may include instruction through electronic instruction, supervised homework, homebound instruction, or enrollment in another district or alternative learning center.

Written Notice of Hearing: Expulsion or exclusion cannot be imposed without a hearing, unless the student and his/her parent waive that right to a hearing. The student and parent must be notified in writing of the District's intent to pursue an expulsion or exclusion. The written notice may be delivered in person to the family or through the mail. The written notice must include:

- A complete statement of facts,
- A list of the witnesses and description of their testimony,
- The date, time, and place of the hearing, and
- Alternative educational services available to the student to avoid expulsion unless it appears that the student will create an immediate and substantial danger to self, others or school property.

The Notice must also inform the student and parent of the following rights:

- The right to have a representative of the student's own choosing, including legal counsel, at the hearing. Free or low-cost legal assistance may be available and a legal assistance resource list is available through the Minnesota Department of Education.
- The right to examine the student's records prior to the hearing.
- The right to present evidence at the hearing and to compel the attendance at the hearing of any school employee or any other person who may have evidence upon which the proposed expulsion or exclusion action is based.
- The right to confront and cross-examine witnesses at the hearing.
- The student's right not to be compelled to testify at the hearing.

The Hearing: Requirements of the hearing are:

- The hearing must be scheduled within ten days of the service of written notice of the intent to expel or exclude, unless an extension of not more than five days is requested for good cause by the school board, student, or parent.
- The hearing must be held at a time and place that are reasonably convenient to the student and parent.
- The hearing shall be closed to the public unless the student or parent requests that it be open.
- The hearing must take place before an impartial hearing officer who shall make a recommendation to the school board within two days of the completion of the hearing based upon the evidence presented at the hearing. The school board must act on the recommendation of the hearing officer within five days of receiving it.
- The student has the right to appeal the school board's decision to the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education within 21 days of the school board's action.

Period of Expulsion for Students with Firearms: A school board must expel a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school for a period of at least one year. The board may modify this expulsion requirement for a student on a case-by-case basis. If a student has been recommended for expulsion for a firearms violation, the District may notify another school district of the violation if the student is seeking admission into that school district.

Special Education Students: Students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) cannot be expelled for conduct the IEP team has determined is related to their disability. If a student has been expelled for conduct that is *not* related to the student's disability, the District must continue to provide special education and related services to the student during the period of expulsion. A district also is responsible to provide special education services to resident students who the district has excluded.

Educational Services during Period of Expulsion: A school district has a continuing responsibility to educate a resident student excluded by the district. The alternative educational services offered to the student during the period of expulsion or exclusion must be adequate to allow the student to make progress towards meeting the graduation standards and prepare the student for readmission to public school.

Admission or Readmission Plan: A school administrator must prepare and enforce an admission or readmission plan for any student who is expelled or excluded from school. The plan may include measures to improve the student's behavior and require parental involvement in the admission or readmission process, and may indicate the consequences to the student of not improving the student's behavior. Whenever a student fails to return to school within ten (10) school days of the termination of an expulsion or exclusion, a school administrator shall inform the student and his/her parents/guardians by mail of the student's right to attend a public school.

**Behavioral Contract
Minneapolis Public Schools**

This contract is designed to help _____
be successful at school. Specific concerns and outcomes addressed by this contract are identified
below:

Concerns

Intended Outcome

In order to achieve these outcomes, each party to the contract has responsibilities as defined
below.

Responsibilities of the student:

Responsibilities of teachers and other school staff:

Responsibilities of the school administrator:

Responsibilities of family members and community supports:

Signatures:

Student: _____

Teacher: _____

Family Member: _____

Administrator: _____

Other Supports: _____

Date: _____

This contract will be reviewed on _____.

Tips for Parents

1. Talk to your children about making safe and healthy decisions early on in their school experience

Children don't always know which situations could be dangerous and parents often don't realize how early children are exposed to dangers like tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs (first use of tobacco is often before the age of 12 and the average age of first use of marijuana is 14).

2. Teach your child to choose friends wisely

Being with other children who make bad decisions increases the risk that your children will also make bad decisions.

3. Role play ways to resist peer pressure

If your child knows what to say, and has practiced what to say, it will be easier for them to resist peer pressure. You also want to role play at different ages when peer pressure will be stronger (the pressure to try risky activities or illegal drugs increases as your child gets older).

4. Know the discipline policy at your child's school

Go over consequences for violating the school's discipline policy. Help your children understand the policy and to know what is expected at school.

5. Get to know your children's schools and teachers

Help your children identify a caring adult in school that they can go to when they need support or are having conflicts.

6. Check your children's book bags and backpacks daily

Know what your child is taking to school and bringing back from school. This can help prevent your child from taking a dangerous item to school unintentionally (i.e. cap guns, pocket knives, lighters, etc. Teachers may sometimes send notes home with children (especially with young students regarding progress or homework).

7. Be proactive if your child tells you about a conflict or unsafe situation

Encourage your child to tell an adult when there is a potential conflict or call the school and tell staff yourself of the potential conflict.

8. Talk about school everyday

Communicate daily about school and school activities with your child. This gives a message that school is important and helps parents stay current with the children's work and school activities. Talking can help identify problems before they become obstacles to your child's education.

Minneapolis Public Schools General information number
612-668-0000