

Rockville Centre Union Free School District

Code of Conduct Guidelines for Character Development and Student Support Summary

Introduction

The Rockville Centre Board of Education (“Board”) is committed to providing a safe, supportive and orderly school environment where all individuals are treated with respect and students may receive, and District personnel may deliver, quality educational services without disruption or interference. Responsible behavior by students, teachers, District personnel, parents and visitors is essential to achieving this goal. Accordingly, the Board has adopted Policy 3410: Code of Conduct. Following is a plain language summary of the District’s Code of Conduct, which is available in its entirety on the District’s website.

Goals of the Code

The goal of the Rockville Centre School District Guidelines for Character Development and Student Support Code of Conduct is to ensure all students the right to an education in a safe, civil and supportive learning environment. The Code is based on laws, regulations, and policies which provide access to education for all, while protecting the due process rights of the individual. The Rockville Centre School District Code of Conduct serves as a guide to good citizenship and civic obligations. The Code addresses both the expectations of conduct and the development of character in the Rockville Centre School Community. Compliance with the expected behaviors outlined in the Code will help students develop self-management and social emotional efficacy, and enable students to improve and correct inappropriate and or unacceptable behaviors.

Student Dress Code

The District has implemented a dress code and all students are expected to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to dress appropriately for school and school functions. Students and their parents have the primary responsibility for acceptable student dress and appearance.

Prohibited Conduct

The Board of Education expects all students to conduct themselves in an appropriate and civil manner with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students, District personnel and other members of the school community, and for the care of school facilities and equipment. Students have the responsibility to comply with all school rules, even those with which they do not agree, and to accept responsibility for their actions. Students may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension from school, when they engage in conduct that is disorderly, insubordinate, disruptive, violent, and/or endangers the safety, moral, health or welfare of others. In addition, students are prohibited from engaging in misconduct on the school bus, academic misconduct and/or off-campus misconduct that interferes with the educational process or persons within the school.

Discrimination, harassment, bullying and cyberbullying are expressly prohibited.

Disciplinary Penalties, Procedures and Referrals

All students are expected to promptly report violations of the Code of Conduct to a teacher, school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, or the building principal or his or her designee. Students who have been bullied, harassed, and/or discriminated against, parents whose children

have been bullied, harassed and/or discriminated against, or other students or staff who observe bullying, harassing and/or discriminating behavior are encouraged and expected to make a verbal and/or written complaint to any school personnel.

Disciplinary action will be taken when necessary by appropriate school personnel. Students who are found to have violated the District's Code of Conduct may be subject to the following consequences either alone or in combination and consistent with the seriousness of the violation and the students' rights to due process:

- Oral warning
- Written warning
- Written notification to parent
- Detention
- Suspension from transportation
- Suspension from athletic participation
- Suspension from social or extra-curricular activities
- Suspension of other privileges
- In-school suspension
- Assignment to Alternative Study Center
- Assignment to regional in-school suspension center
- Removal from classroom by teacher
- Short-term (five days or less) suspension from school
- Long-term (more than five days) suspension from school
- Permanent suspension from school

First Drug and Alcohol Offense- defined as the first time a student attends a school event on or off campus under the influence of or in possession of drugs or alcohol:

- Five-day suspension from school and possible referral to the Superintendent for a hearing, which may lead to a long-term suspension.

- Six school months' suspension from all school and school sponsored activities, including but not limited to sports, practices, clubs, dances, etc.

Second Drug and Alcohol Offense-defined as the second or subsequent time a student attends a school event on or off campus under the influence of or in possession of drugs or alcohol:

- Five-day suspension from school and possible referral to the Superintendent for a hearing, which may lead to a long-term suspension.

- Twelve-month suspension from all school and school sponsored activities including but not limited to sports, practices, clubs, dances, etc.

The due process rights that a student is entitled to are dependent on the penalty being imposed. In all cases, regardless of the penalty imposed, the school personnel authorized to impose the penalty will inform the student and the parent of the alleged misconduct and will investigate, to the extent necessary, the facts surrounding the alleged misconduct. All students will have an opportunity to present their version of the facts to the school personnel imposing the disciplinary penalty in connection with the imposition of the penalty.

With regard to suspensions from school, the procedure varies dependent upon whether a short-term or long-term suspension is proposed. When the Superintendent or principal proposes to suspend a student for five days or less (short-term), he or she will immediately notify the student orally. In addition, the Superintendent or principal will notify the parent(s) in writing and will provide the opportunity for an informal conference. After this conference, the principal will notify

the parents of his or her decision. This decision may be appealed to the Superintendent and ultimately the Board of Education in the event the parent(s) is not satisfied with the decision.

When the Superintendent or building principal determines that a suspension for more than five days may be warranted (long-term), he or she will give reasonable notice to the student and the student's parents of their right to a fair hearing. At the hearing, the student has the right to be represented by counsel, the right to question witnesses against him or her and the right to present witnesses and other evidence on his or her behalf. Either a hearing officer or the Superintendent will conduct the hearing. The Superintendent will make a determination regarding the appropriate measure of discipline following this hearing. An appeal of the Superintendent's decision may be made to the Board of Education.

The District has established minimum periods of suspensions for certain violations of the Code of Conduct. Specifically, students who bring a weapon to school will be suspended for a period of at least one calendar year, students who commit violent acts other than bringing a weapon to school will be suspended for a period of at least five (5) days, and students who are repeatedly substantially disruptive of the educational process or repeatedly substantially interfere with the teacher's authority over the classroom will be suspended for a period of one to five days.

The Guidance Office is responsible for all referrals of students to counseling. The District may implement a Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) diversion application, and/or refer students to the County Attorney for juvenile delinquency proceeding or to the appropriate law enforcement authorities, as required by law.

Discipline of Students with Disabilities

All students with disabilities are expected to follow the Code of Conduct. The District will follow the Individuals Educational Program (IEP) of students with disabilities and will handle all discipline of students with disabilities in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

The Board, Superintendent of Schools or a building principal with authority to suspend students under the Education Law may order the placement of a student with a disability into an Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES), another setting or suspension for a period not to exceed five consecutive days.

The Superintendent may, directly or upon the recommendation of a designated hearing officer, order the placement of a student with a disability into an IAES, another setting or suspension for a period not to exceed ten consecutive school days inclusive of any period in which the student has been suspended or removed for the same behavior pursuant to the above paragraph, if the Superintendent determines that the student's behavior warrants the suspension. The Superintendent also may order additional suspensions of not more than ten consecutive school days in the same school year for separate incidents of misconduct, as long as the suspensions do not constitute a disciplinary change of placement.

In addition, the Superintendent may order the placement of a student with a disability into an IAES, another setting or suspension for a period in excess of ten consecutive school days if the manifestation team determines that the student's behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability. In such an instance, the Superintendent may discipline the student in the same manner and for the same duration as a non-disabled student.

A review of the relationship between a student's disability and the behavior subject to disciplinary action to determine if the conduct is a manifestation of the student's disability will be made by the

manifestation team immediately, if possible, but not later than ten days after a decision is made to change the placement of the student by the Superintendent, an impartial hearing officer, a building principal, or other authorized personnel.

Student Searches and Interrogations

In accordance with the District's Code of Conduct, any school official authorized to impose a disciplinary penalty on a student may question a student about an alleged violation of law or the District Code of Conduct. Students are not entitled to any sort of "Miranda"-type warning before being questioned by school officials, nor are school officials required to contact a student's parent before questioning the student. However, school officials will tell all students why they are being questioned. Further, the Board authorizes the Superintendent, District and building administrators, the school nurse, and security officials (in the presence of an administrator) to conduct searches of students and their belongings if the authorized school official has reasonable suspicion to believe that the search will result in evidence that the student violated the law or the District Code of Conduct.

An authorized school official may conduct a search of a student's belongings that is minimally intrusive, such as touching the outside of a book bag, without reasonable suspicion, so long as the school official has a legitimate reason for the very limited search.

Searches will be documented accordingly.

District officials are committed to cooperating with police officials and other law enforcement authorities to maintain a safe school environment. In the event police officials enter school property and/or school functions, before they are permitted to question or search any student, the building principal or his or her designee will first try to notify the student's parent to give the parent the opportunity to be present during the police questioning or search. Moreover, consistent with the District's commitment to keep students safe from harm and the obligation of school officials to report to child protective services when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a student has been abused or maltreated, the District will cooperate with local child protective services workers who wish to conduct interviews of students on school property relating to allegations of suspected child abuse, and/or neglect, or custody investigations.

Visitors to the School and Public Conduct on School Property

The Code of Conduct applies to all persons on school property and at school functions, including, but not limited to, visitors to the schools of the District and serves to outline public conduct on school property. Specifically, all persons on school property or attending a school function are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful and orderly manner. Visitors found to be in violation of the District's Code of Conduct will have their authorization, if any, to remain on school grounds or at the school function withdrawn, and they will be directed to leave the premises. If a visitor refuses to leave, he or she will be subject to ejection.

Dissemination of the Code of Conduct

A complete Code of Conduct is posted on the District's website. Printed copies of the Code are available at the District's Administrative Offices and at every school's main office. In addition, this plain language summary is disseminated to parent(s) annually, and the Code is provided to all students in an age-appropriate version at the beginning of each school year.