

# Cohoes Elementary Schools'



## Code of Conduct

2016/17

Abram Lansing Elementary School † Harmony Hill School † Van Schaick Grade School



## **Cohoes Elementary Schools**

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Our Board of Education for Cohoes City Schools has worked hard with parents, staff and administrators to put this Code of Conduct in place.

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to make certain that your child is safe at school and behaves in a way that guarantees everyone else's safety. Throughout the next several pages you will read rules and regulations that will assist all of us in providing good learning time for our students while they are at school. The full document approved by the Cohoes City Schools Board of Education is available for your review at any of the elementary school offices. This document is a short form that has the rules for elementary schools only.

Please remember that our schools are large buildings with hundreds of children in attendance. Rules are very different when they are for large groups compared to what you might do at home with only one or two.

Take the time to read this booklet with your child(ren). Talk over the rules with them.

Thank you.

Jacqueline De Chiaro, Cliff Bird, and Mark Perry  
Principals of the Elementary Schools

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# Elementary Code of Conduct

## I. Definitions

For Purposes of this code of conduct, the following definitions apply.

“Disruptive student” means an elementary or secondary student under the age of 21 who is substantially disruptive of the educational process or substantially interferes with the teacher’s authority over the classroom.

“Disability” means (a) a physical, mental or medical impairment resulting from anatomical, physiological, genetic or neurological conditions which prevents the exercise of a normal bodily function or is demonstrable by medically accepted clinical or laboratory diagnostic techniques or (b) a record of such an impairment or (c) a condition regarded by others as such an impairment, provided, however, that in all provisions of this article dealing with employment, the term must be limited to disabilities which, upon the provision of reasonable accommodations, do not prevent the complainant from performing in a reasonable manner the activities involved in the job or occupation sought or held. (Education Law. §11(4) and Executive Law §292(21)).

“Cyberbullying” means harassment or bullying through any form of electronic communication.

“Employee” means any person receiving compensation from a school district or employee of a contracted service provider or worker placed within the school under a public assistance employment program, pursuant to title nine-B of article five of the Social Services Law, and consistent with the provisions of such title for the provision of services to such district, its students or employees, directly or through contract, whereby such services performed by such person involve direct student contact. (Education Law §§ 11(4) and 1125(3))

“Parent” means parent, guardian or person in parental relation to a student.

“School property” means in or within any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, parking lot or land contained within the real property boundary line of a public elementary or secondary school, or in or on a school bus, as defined in Vehicle and Traffic Law #142.

“School Bus” means every motor vehicle owned by a public or governmental agency or private school and operated for the transportation of pupils, children of pupils, teachers and other persons acting in a supervisory capacity, to or from school or school activities, or, privately owned and operated for compensation for the transportation of pupils, children of pupils, teachers and other persons acting in a supervisory capacity to or from school or school activities. (Education Law §11(1) and Vehicle and Traffic Law §142).

"School function" means any school-sponsored extra-curricular event or activity on or off school property as defined in Education Law §11(2).

"Sexual Orientation" shall mean actual or perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality or bisexuality".

"Gender" shall mean actual or perceived sex and shall include a person's gender identity or expression.

"Harassment" or "Bullying" shall mean the creation of a hostile school environment by conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse, including cyber bullying as defined in Education Law §11(8) that either has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits, and/or physical well-being; including conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse that reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause emotional harm; or reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury to a student or to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety. Such conduct includes acts of harassment and/or bullying that occur (1) on school property; and/or (2) at a school event; and/or (3) off school property where such acts create or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property. Acts of harassment and/or bullying shall include but are not limited to non-verbal and verbal threats, intimidation or abuse based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.

"Emotional Harm" in the context of harassment and/or bullying means harm to a student's emotional well-being through creation of a hostile school environment that is so severe or pervasive as to unreasonably and substantially interfere with a student's education. "Material Incident of Harassment, Bullying and/or Discrimination" means a single verified incident or a series of related verified incidents where a student is subject to harassment, bullying and/or discrimination by a student and/or employee on school property or at a school function. Such term shall include a verified incident or series of related incidents of harassment or bullying that occur off school property, meets the definition of subpart K of this section, and is the subject of a written or oral complaint to the superintendent, principal or their designee, or other school employee.

"School function" means any school-sponsored extra-curricular event or activity.

"Violent student" means a student under the age of 21 who:

1. Commits an act of violence upon a school employee, or attempts to do so.
2. Commits, while on school property or at a school function, an act of violence upon another student or any other person lawfully on school property or at school functions, or attempts to do so.
3. Possesses, while on school property or at a school function, a weapon.
4. Displays, while on school property or at a function, what appears to be a weapon.

5. Threatens, while on school property or at a school function, to use a weapon.
6. Knowingly and intentionally damages or destroys the personal property of any school employee or any person lawfully on school property or at a school function.
7. Knowingly and intentionally damages or destroys school district property.

“Weapon” means a firearm as defined in 18 USC 921 for purposes of the Gun-Free Schools Act. It also means any other gun, BB gun, pistol, revolver, shotgun, rifle, machine gun, disguised gun, dagger, dirk, razor, stiletto, switchblade knife, gravity knife, brass knuckles, sling shot, metal knuckle knife, box cutter, cane sword, electronic dart gun, Kung Fu star, electronic stun gun, electronic stun toy, pepper spray or other noxious spray, explosive or incendiary bomb, or other device, instrument, metal or substance that can cause physical injury or death.

## **II. Student Rights and Responsibilities**

### **A. Student Rights**

The district is committed to safeguarding the rights given to all students under state and federal law. In addition, to promote a safe, healthy, orderly and civil school environment, all students have the right to:

1. Take part in all school activities on an equal basis regardless of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practices, gender (including identity and expression), sexual orientation, disability or sex.
2. Present their version of the relevant events to school personnel authorized to impose a disciplinary penalty in connection with the imposition of the penalty.
3. Access school rules and, when necessary, receive an explanation of those rules from school personnel.
4. To be protected from intimidation, harassment, bullying and/or discrimination based on actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, sex, gender, including gender identity, sexual orientation or disability, by employees or students on school property or at a school sponsored event, function or activity

## **B. Student Responsibilities**

All students have the responsibility to:

1. Help maintain a safe and orderly school environment and to show respect to other persons and to property.
2. Be familiar with and follow all school policies, rules and regulations dealing with student conduct.
3. Attend school every day unless they are legally excused and be in class, on time, and prepared to learn.
4. Work to the best of their ability in all academic and extracurricular activities and strive to do their best.
5. Follow directions given by teachers, administrators and other school personnel.
6. Ask questions when they do not understand.
7. Seek help in solving problems that might lead to discipline.
8. Dress appropriately for school and school functions.
9. Accept responsibilities for their actions.
10. Conduct themselves as representatives of the district when participating in or attending school sponsored extracurricular events and to hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct, demeanor, and sportsmanship. Students who are absent from school for any reason will not be permitted to attend after school or evening activities. This includes leaving school early due to illness.
11. To respect one another and treat each other fairly and civilly in accordance with the District Code of Conduct and provisions of the Dignity for All Students Act, including the responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner that fosters an environment free from intimidation, harassment or discrimination.

## **III. Essential Partners**

### **A. Parents**

All parents are expected to:

1. Recognize that the education of their child (ren) is a joint responsibility of the parents and the school community.
2. Send their children to school ready to participate and learn.
3. Ensure their children attend school regularly and on time.
4. Ensure absences are excused.
5. Insist their children be dressed and groomed consistent with the student dress code.
6. Help their children understand that in a democratic society appropriate rules are required to maintain a safe, orderly environment.
7. Know school rules and help their children understand them.
8. Convey to their children a supportive attitude toward education and the district.
9. Build good relationships with teachers, other parents and their children's friends.

10. Help their children deal effectively with peer pressure.
11. Inform school officials of changes in the home situation that may affect student conduct or performance.
12. Provide a place for study and ensure homework assignments are completed.
13. Teach their children respect and dignity for themselves and for other students, regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion or religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity or sex, which will strengthen their child's confidence and help promote learning in accordance with the Dignity for All Students Act.

## **B. Teachers**

All teachers are expected to:

1. Maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity, which will strengthen students' self-concept and promote confidence to learn.
2. Be prepared to teach.
3. Demonstrate interest in teaching and concern for student achievement.
4. Know school policies and rules, and enforce them in a fair and consistent manner.
5. Confront issues of discrimination, bullying and/or harassment or any situation that threatens the emotional or physical health or safety of any student, school employee or any person who is lawfully on school property or at a school function.
6. Address personal biases that may prevent equal treatment of all students in the school or classroom setting.
7. Report incidents of discrimination, bullying and/or harassment that are witnessed by teachers; reported orally or in writing; or otherwise brought to a teacher's attention to the Principal, Superintendent or their designee within one (1) school day orally and file a written report within two (2) school days thereafter with the Principal, Superintendent or their designee.
8. Communicate to students and parents:
  - a. Course objectives and requirements
  - b. Marking/grading procedures
  - c. Assignment deadlines
  - d. Expectations for students
  - e. Classroom discipline plan.
9. Communicate regularly with students, parents and other teachers concerning growth and achievement.

## **C. Counseling Staff (Social Worker, School Psychologist)**

1. Assist students in coping with peer pressure and emerging personal, social and emotional problems.

2. Initiate teacher/student/counselor conferences and parent/teacher/student/counselor conferences, as necessary, as a way to resolve problems.
3. Regularly review with students their educational progress and career plans.
4. Provide information to assist students with career planning.
5. Encourage students to benefit from the curriculum and extracurricular programs.
6. Maintain and encourage a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender and gender identity or sex, with an understanding of appropriate appearance, language and behavior in a school setting, which will strengthen students' self-image and promote confidence to learn.
7. Report orally any incidents of discrimination, bullying and/or harassment that are witnessed or otherwise brought to the counselor's attention to the Principal, Superintendent or their designee within one (1) school day and must file a written report of such incident with the designated official within two (2) school days after making the oral report. .

#### **D. Principals**

Principals are expected to:

1. Promote a safe, orderly and stimulating school environment, supporting active teaching and learning.
2. Ensure that students and staff have the opportunity to communicate regularly with the principal and approach the principal for redress of grievances.
3. Evaluate all instructional programs on a regular basis.
4. Support the development of and student participation in appropriate extracurricular activities.
5. Be responsible for enforcing the code of conduct and ensuring that all cases are resolved promptly and fairly.
6. Maintain and encourage a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion and religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender and gender identity or sex, with an understanding of appropriate appearance, language and behavior in a school setting, which will strengthen student' self-image and promote confidence to learn.
7. Promptly lead or supervise and complete a thorough investigation of all written reports of discrimination, bullying and/or harassment that are submitted or reported to the Principal, Superintendent or their designee's attention. Such investigation may be performed in collaboration with the Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC).
8. When an investigation verifies a material incident of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination, the principal, superintendent and/or their designee (including the DAC) shall take prompt action, consistent with the District's code of conduct,

including but not limited to the provisions of 100.2(l)(2)(ii)(h), reasonably calculated to end the harassment, bullying and/or discrimination, eliminate any hostile environment and create a more positive school culture and climate.

9. Ensure the safety of the student or students against whom harassment, bullying or discrimination was directed.
10. Shall promptly notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when it is believed that any harassment, bullying or discrimination constitutes criminal conduct.
11. Shall provide a regular report on data and trends related to harassment, bullying and/or discrimination to the Superintendent. A “regular report” shall mean at least once during each school year in a manner proscribed by the District.

**The following principals are Dignity Act Coordinators (DAC) for their respective schools:**

Jacqueline DeChiaro – Van Schaick Grade School, 518.237.2828 x4100  
[jdechiar@cohoes.org](mailto:jdechiar@cohoes.org), 150 Continental Avenue, Cohoes, NY 12047

Cliff Bird – Abram Lansing School, 518.237.5034 x3120  
[cbird@cohoes.org](mailto:cbird@cohoes.org), 26 James Street, Cohoes, NY 12047

Mark Perry – Harmony Hill School, 518.233.1900 x5221  
[mperry@cohoes.org](mailto:mperry@cohoes.org), 1 Madelon Hickey Way, Cohoes, NY 12047

*The name and Contact information for the Dignity Act Coordinators (DAC) will be shared with all school personnel, students, parents and persons in parental relation at least once per year in a manner as determined by the school, including but not limited to through electronic communication and/or sending this information home with students.*

*A change in the name and/or contact information of a Dignity Act Coordinator shall not be deemed to constitute a revision to the Code of Conduct which requires a public hearing.*

### **E. Superintendent**

The Superintendent is expected to:

1. Promote a stimulating school environment, supporting active teaching and learning.
2. Review, with district administrators, the policies of the board of education and state and federal laws relating to school operations and management
3. Inform the board about educational trends relating to student discipline.
4. Work to create instructional programs that minimize problems of misconduct and are sensitive to student and teacher needs.
5. Work with district administrators in enforcing the code of conduct and ensuring that any cases are resolved promptly and fairly.

6. Promote a safe, orderly, respectful and positive school environment, free from intimidation, harassment, bullying and/or discrimination.
7. The Superintendent and/or their designee shall lead or supervise the thorough investigation of all reports of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination to ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports made under Education Law section 13.
8. When an investigation verifies a material incident of harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination, the Superintendent or their designee shall take prompt action, consistent with the District's code of conduct, including but not limited to the provisions of section 100.2(l)(2)(ii)(h), reasonably calculated to end harassment, bullying and/or discrimination, eliminate any hostile environment, create a more positive school culture and climate and prevent recurrence of the behavior.
9. The Superintendent and/or their designee shall ensure the safety of the student or students against whom harassment, bullying and/or discrimination was directed.
10. The Superintendent and/or their designee shall notify promptly the appropriate law enforcement agency when it is believed that any harassment, bullying or discrimination constitutes criminal conduct.
11. Shall receive the regular report on data and trends related to harassment, bullying and/or discrimination from the principal.

#### **F. Board of Education**

The Board of Education is expected to:

1. Collaborate with student, teacher, administrator, and parent organizations, school safety personnel and other school personnel to develop a code of conduct that clearly defines expectations and the conduct of students, district personnel and visitors on school property and at school functions.
2. Adopt and review at least annually the district's code of conduct to evaluate the codes and effectiveness and the fairness and consistency of its implementation.
3. Appoint a Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC) in each school building who has the appropriate licensure and/or certification by the Commissioner of Education as a classroom teacher, school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, school administrator or supervisor or Superintendent of Schools.
  - In the event a Dignity Act Coordinator vacates his or her position, another eligible employee shall be immediately designated for an interim appointment as Coordinator, pending approval of a successor Coordinator by the Board within thirty (30) days of the date the position was vacated.
  - In the event that a Coordinator is unable to perform the duties of his or her position for an extended period of time, another eligible employee shall be immediately designated for an interim appointment as Coordinator, pending the return of the previous Coordinator to his or her duties as Coordinator.

4. Ensure that each Dignity Act Coordinator appointed will be thoroughly trained to handle human relations in areas of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion or religious practices, disability, sexual orientation, gender and gender identity and sex. The Dignity Act Coordinator must be accessible to students and other staff members for consultation and advice as needed on the Dignity Act.
5. Ensure that the DAC appointed shall be provided with training which addresses the social patterns of harassment, bullying and discrimination, including, but not limited to, those acts based on a persons' actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.
6. Ensure that each DAC will be provided with training in the identification and mitigation of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination.
7. Ensure that each DAC will be provided with training strategies for effectively addressing problems of exclusion, bias and aggression in educational settings.
8. Ensure that each DAC will be accessible to students and other staff members for consultation and advice, as needed, on the Dignity for All Students Act
9. Designate the school employee(s) charged with receiving reports of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination
10. Submit an annual report of material incidents of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination that occurred in each school year to the Commissioner in accordance with Education Law §15.
11. Lead by example by conducting board meetings in a professional, respectful, courteous manner.

#### **IV. Attendance Expectations:**

The Cohoes Elementary Schools believe that regular school attendance and student success have a direct correlation. It is the expectation of the Cohoes Elementary Schools to comply with New York State Education Law that requires students to be in attendance every day. If a student accumulates 3 unexcused absences a notice will be sent home noting that excessive absences from school are occurring. If 9 unexcused absences occur, a parent or guardian will meet with the principal to discuss the absences.

**In the case of a student's absence from school, parents are required to call the main office of the school to inform us of the reason for the student's absence. Otherwise the school will make every reasonable attempt to contact the parents regarding the student's absence.**

Please note that a written excuse must be provided and brought to the homeroom teacher by the student upon his/her return to school.

The following reasons are considered to be excused absences from school:

- a. Illness

- b. Death in the family
- c. Religious observance
- d. Weather – roads are impassible
- e. Court appearance or legal appointment
- f. Doctor/dentist

The following are examples of unexcused absences from school:

- a. Babysitting
- b. Transportation issues
- c. Vacation
- d. Alarm didn't go off

## **V. Dress Code**

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. Teachers and all other personnel should exemplify and reinforce acceptable student dress and help students develop an understanding of appropriate appearance in the school setting.

A student's dress, grooming and appearance, including hair style/color, jewelry, make-up and nails, shall:

1. Be safe, appropriate and not disrupt, distract or interfere with the educational process for themselves, the teachers or classmates.
2. Recognize that extremely brief apparel such as tube tops, halter-tops, half-shirts, spaghetti straps, and short shorts are not appropriate.
3. Ensure that underwear is completely covered with outer clothing.
4. Include footwear at all times. Footwear that is a safety hazard will not be allowed such as flip flops or shoes without backs. No "heelies" or sneakers/shoes with wheels will be allowed.
5. Not include the wearing of hats or other head coverings (i.e. bandanas) in the schools except for a medical or religious purpose.
6. Not include items that are vulgar, obscene, libelous, or denigrate others on account of actual or perceived race, color, weight, religion or religious practice, ethnic group, national origin, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, sex or disability.
7. Not promote and/or endorse the use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs and/or encourage other illegal or violent activities.

Each building principal or his/her designee shall be responsible for informing all students and their parents of the student dress code at the beginning of the school year and any

revisions to the dress code made during the school year. Students who violate the student dress code shall be required to modify their appearance by covering or removing the offending item and, if necessary or practical, replacing it with an acceptable item. Any student who refuses to do so shall be subject to disciplinary procedures.

## **VI. Positive Student Expectations**

All students are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate and civil manner, with regard for the rights and welfare of other students, personnel and other members of the school community, and for the care of school facilities and equipment. Students must learn to accept responsibility for their own behavior, as well as the consequences of their misbehavior. Students who will not accept responsibility for their own behavior and who violate school rules will be required to accept the penalties for their conduct. Personnel who interact with students are expected to use disciplinary action only when necessary and to place emphasis on the students' ability to grow in self-discipline.

Our district follows the philosophy of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. Our common expectations are:

**Be safe.**

**Be respectful.**

**Be responsible.**

Students are taught our expectations periodically throughout the school year.

## VII. Prohibited Student Conduct

The board recognizes the need to make its expectations for student conduct while on school property or engaged in a school function specific and clear. The rules of conduct listed below are intended to do that and focus on safety and respect for the rights and property of others. Students who will not accept responsibility for their own behavior and who violate these school rules will be required to accept the penalties for their conduct.

Students may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension from school, when they:

**A. Engage in conduct that is disorderly. Examples of disorderly conduct include:**

1. Running in hallways.
2. Making unreasonable noise.
3. Using language or gestures that are profane, lewd, vulgar or abusive.
4. Obstructing vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
5. Engaging in any willful act, which disrupts the normal operation of the school community.
6. Trespassing. Students are not permitted in any school building, other than the one they regularly attend, or on school property, without permission from the administrator in charge of the building.
7. Computer/electronic communications misuse, including any unauthorized use of computers, software, or internet/intranet account, engaging in cyberbullying; accessing inappropriate web sites; or any other violation of the district's acceptable use policy.

**B. Engage in conduct that is insubordinate. Examples of insubordinate conduct include:**

1. Failing to comply with the reasonable directions of teachers, school administrators or other school employees in charge of students or otherwise demonstrating disrespect.
2. Lateness for, missing or leaving school without permission.

**C. Engage in conduct that is disruptive. Examples of Disruptive conduct include:**

1. Failing to comply with the reasonable directions of teachers, school administrators or other school personnel in charge of students.

**D. Engage in conduct that is violent. Examples of violent conduct include:**

1. Committing or attempting to commit an act of violence (such as, but not limited to hitting, kicking, punching, pushing, spitting, throwing of any object, and scratching) upon a teacher, school employee, another student or other person lawfully on school property.

2. Bringing a weapon to school. (“Weapon” is defined on page 7.) Authorized law enforcement officials are the only persons permitted to have a weapon in their possession while on school property or at a school function.
3. Displaying what appears to be a weapon, including any toy that “looks” like a weapon.
4. Threatening to use any weapon.
5. Bringing “stun toys” to school e.g. shocking packs of gum, flashlights, etc.
6. Intentionally damaging or destroying the personal property of a student, teacher, administrator, other district employee or any person lawfully on school property, including graffiti or arson.
7. Intentionally damaging or destroying school district property.
8. Engaging in harassing, bullying or discriminatory conduct, including through threats, intimidation or abuse which may include verbal and non-verbal actions, which has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student’s educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional and/or physical well-being, including conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse that reasonably causes or would be reasonably expected to cause emotional harm; or reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a physical injury to a student or to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety; or well being or creates or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property

**E.** Engage in any criminal activity or conduct that endangers the safety, morals, health or welfare of others. Examples of such conduct include:

1. Lying to school personnel.
2. Stealing the property of other students, school personnel or any other person lawfully on school property or attending a school function.
3. Defamation, which includes making false or unprivileged statements or representations about an individual or identifiable group of individuals that harm the reputation of the person or the identifiable group by demeaning them.
4. Discrimination, which includes the use of actual or perceived race, color, weight, creed, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, gender, sexual orientation or disability as a basis for treating another in a negative manner.
5. Engaging in harassing, bullying or discriminatory conduct, including through threats, intimidation or abuse which may include verbal and non-verbal actions, which has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student’s educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional and/or physical well-being, including conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse that reasonably causes or would be reasonably expected to cause emotional harm; or reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a physical injury to a student or to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety; or well being or creates or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school

6. Intimidation or bullying, which includes engaging in actions or statements that put an individual in fear of harm, including intimidation through the use of epithets or slurs involving actual or perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, religious practices, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age or disability that substantially disrupts the educational process or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially intervening with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits; or mental, emotional and/or physical well-being, including conduct which reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause emotional harm; or reasonably causes or would be reasonably expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety. Intimidation, cyberbullying and bullying are forms of harassment.
7. Hazing which includes any intentional or reckless act directed against another which creates a substantial risk of physical injury for the purpose of initiation into, affiliating with or maintaining membership in any school sponsored activity, organization, club or team.
8. Selling, using or possessing obscene material.
9. Using vulgar or abusive language, cursing or swearing.
10. Smoking a cigarette, cigar, pipe or using chewing or smokeless tobacco.
11. Possession, consuming, selling, distributing or exchanging alcoholic beverages or illegal substances, or being under the influence of either. "Illegal substances" include, but are not limited to, inhalants, marijuana, synthetic cannabinoids (marijuana look-alikes), cocaine, LSD, PCP, amphetamines, heroine, steroids, look-alike drugs, and any substances commonly referred to as "designer drugs."
12. Inappropriately using or sharing prescription and over-the-counter drugs.
13. Gambling.
14. Indecent exposure, that is, exposure to sight of the private parts of the body in a lewd or indecent manner.
15. Inappropriate displays of affection.
16. Initiating a report warning of fire or other catastrophe without valid cause, misuse of 911, or discharging a fire extinguisher.

**F. Engage in misconduct while on a school bus.**

It is crucial for students to behave appropriately while riding on district, or district employed, buses to ensure their safety and that of other passengers and to avoid distracting the bus driver. Students are required to conduct themselves on the bus in a manner consistent with established standards for classroom behavior. Excessive noise, pushing, shoving and fighting will not be tolerated.

**G. Engage in any form of academic misconduct. Examples of academic misconduct include:**

1. Plagiarism.
2. Cheating.
3. Copying.
4. Altering records.

H. Cell phones/camera phones may not be used in school, must remain off, and in backpacks or school bags during the school day. No pictures or recording are to be taken or made during school using any portable electronic device.

## VIII. Cohoes Elementary Anti-Bullying Statement

### Statement:

The Cohoes Elementary Schools view the act of bullying/cyber-bullying, harassment and/or discrimination as very serious issues. All staff, parents and students must be aware that bullying, harassment and/or discrimination, whether physical, verbal, non-verbal, or cyber, will not be tolerated at school, and the staff and administration will make every effort to ensure that incidents of bullying, harassment and/or discrimination are dealt with appropriately. Material incidents of bullying, harassment and/or discrimination may result in disciplinary consequences and/or other appropriate remedial action reasonably calculated to end the harassment, bullying and/or discrimination, prevent recurrence, and eliminate the hostile environment.

Disciplinary measures in responding to acts of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination against students by employees or students will incorporate a progressive model of student discipline that includes measured, balanced and age-appropriate remedies and procedures that make appropriate use of prevention, education, intervention and discipline and considers, among other things, the nature and severity of the offending student's behavior(s), the developmental age of the student, the previous disciplinary record of the student and other extenuating circumstances, and the impact the student's behaviors had on the individual(s) who was physically injured and/or emotionally harmed. Responses shall be reasonably calculated to end the harassment, bullying and/or discrimination, prevent recurrence and eliminate the hostile environment. This progressive model of student discipline will be consistent with other provisions of the Code of Conduct .

### Definition of Bullying:

Bullying includes non-verbal and verbal threats or intimidation which causes or would reasonably cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety, or which causes or would reasonably cause emotional harm. Bullying may include **repeated** behavior, comments or actions that make someone feel uncomfortable or threatened. Bullying is an action that hurts, frightens, or upsets someone else. There are three main types of bullying:

1. Verbal or non-verbal name calling, teasing, insulting, writing unkind notes, and threatening;
2. Intimidation (verbal and non-verbal) which may include physical hitting, kicking, punching, taking or hiding belongings, damaging property or engaging in actions or statements which put someone in fear that they will be hurt.;
3. Exclusion such as being unfriendly, ignoring, tormenting, spreading rumors, making false stories up; giving looks.

### Cyber-bullying:

Cyber-bullying is harassment or bullying which occurs through any form of electronic communication. Examples of cyberbullying include being cruel to others by sending or

posting harmful material or engaging in other forms of social cruelty using the Internet or other digital technologies such as text messaging, blogging, posting information on social websites, e-mail, instant messaging, etc.. It has various forms, including direct harassment and indirect activities that are intended to damage the reputation or interfere with the relationships of the student targeted, such as posting harmful material, impersonating the person, disseminating personal information or images, or activities that result in exclusion.

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the anti-bullying statement is to reinforce to all stakeholders at our elementary schools that harassment, discrimination and/or bullying is always unacceptable. This statement is a proactive measure, thus focusing on constructs that will help identify and remediate the deeper levels of bullying behavior as opposed to focusing exclusively on disciplinary reactions, which may not address the underlying cause.

The District will provide instruction to students in grades Kindergarten through twelfth (12) on subjects including tolerance, respect for others, and dignity as well as raising awareness and sensitivity to bullying, discrimination and/or harassment and civility in the relations of people of different actual or perceived race, weight, national origin, religion, religious practice, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender and sex as part of the instruction in civility, citizenship and character education. This instruction will include an emphasis on discouraging acts of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination. Such instruction will also include instruction on the safe and responsible use of the internet and electronic communications.

### **Statement of Beliefs:**

All students should feel safe in all areas of the school at all times.

We aim to encourage a climate of positive support throughout the building.

We encourage students to realize that they do not have to tolerate harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination and they need to inform someone if they are being bullied, harassed or discriminated against.

Students must be confident in the knowledge that they will be listened to, given full consideration and prompt action will be taken in a manner that is sensitive to their concerns.

### **Remediation/Discipline/Penalties**

Any individual who violates this policy by engaging in harassment, bullying and/or discrimination will be subject to appropriate action, which may include disciplinary action. Remedial responses to bullying include measures designed to correct the problem behavior, prevent another occurrence of the behavior, and protect the target of the act. Appropriate remedial measures may include, but are not limited to:

- Restitution and restoration;
- Peer support group;
- Corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experience;
- Changes in class schedule
- Supportive intervention;

- Behavioral assessment or evaluation;
- Behavioral management plan, with benchmarks that are closely monitored;
- Student counseling;
- Parent conferences; or
- Student treatment or therapy.

Environmental remediation may include, but is not limited to:

- School and community surveys or other strategies for determining the conditions contributing to the relevant behavior;
- Modification of schedules;
- Adjustment in hallway traffic and other student routes of travel;
- Targeted use of monitors;
- Parent education seminars/workshops;
- Peer support groups.

Disciplinary measures available to school authorities include, but are not limited to the following:

Students: Discipline may range from a reprimand up to and including suspension from school, to be imposed consistent with the Code of Conduct and applicable law.

Employees: Discipline may range from a warning up to and including termination, to be imposed consistent with all applicable contractual and statutory rights.

Volunteers: Penalties may range from a warning up to and including loss of volunteer assignment.

Vendors: Penalties may range from a warning up to and including loss of District business.

Other individuals: Penalties may range from a warning up to and including denial of future access to school property.

## **IX. Reporting Violations**

Staff will impose disciplinary consequences in a prompt, fair and lawful manner. District staff who are not authorized to impose disciplinary consequences are expected to promptly report violations of the code of conduct to their supervisor, who shall in turn impose appropriate consequences, if so authorized, or refer the matter to a staff member who is authorized to do so. Any student observing a student being harassed, bullied or discriminated against by another student or a staff member shall report this information, either orally, or in writing, immediately to a teacher, the Principal, the Principal's designee, the Superintendent of Schools or the Dignity Act Coordinator.

Staff who receive oral or written reports of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination, or who witness such acts shall report orally within one (1) school day to the Principal, the Principal's designee, the Superintendent of schools or the Dignity Act Coordinator. Following the oral report, a written report of act(s) of harassment, discrimination and/or bullying shall be filed within two (2) school days with the official designated to receive the reports. Following the report, the District Principal, administrator, Superintendent or their designee shall lead or supervise the thorough investigation of all reports of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination and to ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written report.

When an investigation verifies that a material incident of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination took place, the Superintendent, Principal, administrator or their designee shall take prompt action, consistent with the District's Code of Conduct, reasonably calculated to end the harassment, bullying and/or discrimination, eliminate any hostile environment, create a more positive school culture and climate, prevent recurrence of the behavior and ensure the safety of the student(s) against whom such behavior was directed. Any weapon, alcohol or illegal substance found will be taken away immediately, followed by disciplinary action if warranted. Parents will be notified as soon as possible and in some cases the building principal may have to call the police.

The Principal or his/her designee must notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency of those code violations, including harassment, bullying and/or acts of discrimination that may constitute a crime and substantially affect the order or security of a school as soon as practical, but in no event later than the close of business the day the Principal or his/her designee learns of the violation. The notification must identify the student and explain the conduct that violated the code of conduct and may have constituted a crime.

### **Confidentiality**

An individual's desire for confidentiality must be balanced with the District's legal obligation to provide due process to the accused, to conduct a prompt and thorough investigation, and/or to take necessary action to resolve the complaint, therefore the District retains the right to disclose the identity of parties and witnesses to complaints in appropriate circumstances to individuals with a need to know. The staff member responsible for investigating complaints will discuss confidentiality standards and concerns with all complainants.

If a complainant requests that his/her name not be revealed to the individual(s) against whom a complaint is filed, the staff member responsible for conducting the investigation shall inform the complainant that:

1. The request may limit the District's ability to respond to his/her complaint;
2. District policy and federal law prohibit retaliation against complainants and witnesses;
3. The District will attempt to prevent any retaliation; and
4. The District will take strong responsive action if retaliation occurs.

If the complainant still requests confidentiality after being given the notice above, the investigator will take all reasonable steps to investigate and respond to the complaint consistent with the request as long as doing so does not preclude the District from responding effectively to the bullying and preventing the bullying of other students.

## **Investigation and Resolution Procedure**

### **A. Initial (Building-level) Procedure**

Whenever a complaint of bullying is received by a staff member, whether verbal or written, it should be reported immediately to the principal or their designee within one (1) school day of receiving or witnessing the incident; within two (3) school days of verbally reporting the incident, the staff member must file a written report with the principal or their designee. Except in the case of severe or criminal conduct, the principal, the principal's designee or the Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC) shall make all reasonable efforts to resolve complaints at the school level. The goal of the investigative process is to address incidents of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination promptly and to end the bullying, prevent future incidents, ensure the safety of the target and obtain a prompt and equitable resolution to a complaint.

As soon as possible, but no later than three school days following receipt of a complaint, the principal, the principal's designee or the Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC) will begin an investigation of the complaint by:

- Reviewing any written documentation provided by the target(s).
- Conducting separate interviews of the target victim(s), alleged perpetrator(s), and witnesses, if any, and documenting the conversations.
- Providing the alleged perpetrator(s) a chance to respond and notify him/her that if objectionable behavior has occurred, it must cease immediately. The individual will be made aware of remediation opportunities as well as potential disciplinary consequences.
- Determining whether the complainant needs any accommodations to ensure his/her safety, and following up periodically until the complaint has been resolved. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to:
  - A “permanent” hall pass that allows the student to visit a designated adult at any time;
  - Access to private bathroom facilities;
  - Access to private locker room facilities;
  - An escort during passing periods;
  - A “stay away” agreement with the aggressor/harasser;
  - Reviewing and adjusting schedules to avoid interaction between the target and the alleged aggressor(s)
  - If the student feels unsafe in a specific class, an opportunity for individual tutoring or independent study until the case is resolved; upon request
  - Permission to use personal cell phone in the event that the student feels threatened and needs immediate assistance;

- Assignment of a bus monitor.
- Counseling support

The District recognizes that there is a need to balance accommodations which enhance student safety against the potential to further stigmatize the targeted student. Therefore, each case will be handled individually, and the student, parent/guardian, and school administration will collaborate to establish safety provisions that best meet the needs of the targeted student. Follow-up discussion and/or meetings will be scheduled, as needed, to ensure that safety concerns have been adequately addressed and to determine when and if accommodations need to be changed or discontinued.

Where appropriate, informal methods may be used to resolve the complaint, including but not limited to:

- a. discussion with the accused, informing him or her of the District's policies and indicating that the behavior must stop;
- b. suggesting counseling, skill building activities and/or sensitivity training;
- c. conducting additional training or education for the department or school in which the behavior occurred, calling attention to the consequences of engaging in such behavior;
- d. requesting a letter of apology to the target;
- e. writing letters of caution or reprimand; and/or
- f. separating the parties.
- g. establishing a "stay away" agreement

Appropriate disciplinary action shall be recommended and imposed in accordance with District policy, the applicable collective bargaining agreement or state law. School District should make every effort to attempt to first resolve the misconduct through non-punitive and remedial measures.

Disciplinary measures to address incidents of harassment, discrimination and/or bullying shall incorporate a progressive model of student discipline that includes measured, balanced and age-appropriate remedies and procedures that make appropriate use of prevention, education, intervention and discipline and considers among other things, the nature and severity of the student's offending behavior(s) the developmental stage of the student, the previous disciplinary record of the student and other extenuating circumstances, as well as the impact the student's behaviors had on the individual(s) who was physically injured and/or emotionally harmed. Responses shall be reasonably calculated to end the harassment, bullying and/or discrimination, prevent recurrence, and eliminate the hostile environment. This progressive model of student discipline shall be consistent with other provisions of the code of conduct.

The investigator shall report back to both the target and the accused, within ten school days notifying them in writing, and also in person, as appropriate, regarding the outcome or status of the investigation and the action taken to resolve the complaint. The actions taken will be in conformance with the *Remediation/Discipline/Penalties* section of this document. The target shall report immediately if the objectionable behavior occurs

again or if the alleged perpetrator retaliates against him/her. Retaliation against a student or staff member who, in good faith, makes a report or participates in the investigation of a complaint of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination is strictly prohibited.

If the administrator or district designee believes that a reported incident may constitute criminal action, the District shall notify the proper law enforcement agency promptly and shall notify the Superintendent that such a report was made. To the extent appropriate, the complainant will also be advised of other avenues to pursue their complaint, including contact information for state and federal authorities.

Any party who is not satisfied with the outcome of the initial investigation may request a District-level investigation by submitting a written complaint to the Superintendent within 30 days.

### **District-level Procedure**

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall promptly arrange for the investigation and resolution of all bullying, harassment and/or discrimination appeals and complaints that are referred to him/her. In the event that a complaint involves the Superintendent, such complaint shall be filed with the Board President and the Board shall designate an individual to conduct the investigation.

The Superintendent shall also promptly address any appeals of the outcome of an initial investigation. The District level investigation should begin as soon as possible (three working days) following receipt of the appeal by the Superintendent or Board President.

If a District level investigation results in a determination that bullying did occur, prompt corrective action will be taken to end the misbehavior in accordance with the *Remediation/Discipline/Penalties* section of this regulation.

No later than 30 days following receipt of the complaint, the Superintendent (or in cases involving the Superintendent, the Board-appointed investigator) will notify the target and alleged perpetrator, in writing, of the outcome of the investigation. If additional time is needed to complete the investigation or take appropriate action, the Superintendent or Board-designated investigator will provide all parties with a written status report within 30 days following receipt of the complaint.

Any party who is not satisfied with the outcome of the District-level investigation may appeal to the Board of Education by submitting a written request to the Board President within 30 days.

### **Board-level Procedure**

When a request for review by the Board has been made, the Superintendent shall submit all written statements and other materials concerning the case to the President of the Board.

The Board shall notify all parties concerned of the time and place when an informal hearing will be held. Such hearing will be held within 15 school days of the receipt of the request of the complainant.

The Board shall render a decision in writing within 15 days after the informal hearing has been concluded.

The District shall retain documentation associated with complaints and investigations in accordance with Schedule ED-1.

### **Remediation/Discipline/Penalties**

Any individual who violates this policy by engaging in harassment, bullying and/or discrimination will be subject to appropriate action, which may include disciplinary action. Remedial responses to bullying include measures designed to correct the problem behavior, prevent another occurrence of the behavior, and protect the target of the act. Appropriate remedial measures may include, but are not limited to:

- Restitution and restoration;
- Peer support group;
- Corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experience;
- Changes in class schedule
- Supportive intervention;
- Behavioral assessment or evaluation;
- Behavioral management plan, with benchmarks that are closely monitored;
- Student counseling;
- Parent conferences; or
- Student treatment or therapy.

Environmental remediation may include, but is not limited to:

- School and community surveys or other strategies for determining the conditions contributing to the relevant behavior;
- Modification of schedules;
- Adjustment in hallway traffic and other student routes of travel;
- Targeted use of monitors;
- Parent education seminars/workshops;
- Peer support groups.

Disciplinary measures available to school authorities include, but are not limited to the following:

Students: Discipline may range from a reprimand up to and including suspension from school, to be imposed consistent with the Code of Conduct and applicable law.

Employees: Discipline may range from a warning up to and including termination, to be imposed consistent with all applicable contractual and statutory rights.

Volunteers: Penalties may range from a warning up to and including loss of volunteer assignment.

Vendors: Penalties may range from a warning up to and including loss of District business.

Other individuals: Penalties may range from a warning up to and including denial of future access to school property.

Retaliation Prohibited Any act of retaliation against any person who reports or has filed a complaint of harassing, bullying or discriminatory behavior, is strictly prohibited, and therefore subject to disciplinary action. Likewise, retaliation against any person who has testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing of a harassment or discrimination complaint is prohibited. For purposes of this policy, retaliation includes but is not limited to: verbal or physical threats, intimidation, ridicule, bribes, destruction of property, spreading rumors, stalking, harassing phone calls, and any other form of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination. Any person who retaliates is subject to immediate disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or termination, as applicable.

Where incidents involve violations of civil rights, the victim and the alleged perpetrator have the right to be represented by a person of their choice, at their own expense, during investigations and hearings. In addition, victims have the right to register complaints with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

Employee victims also have the right to register complaints with the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the New York State Division of Human Rights. Nothing in these regulations shall be construed to limit the right of the complainant to file a lawsuit in either state or federal court.

## **X. Disciplinary Penalties**

Discipline is most effective when it deals directly with the problem at the time and place it occurs, and in a way that students view as fair and impartial. School personnel who interact with students are expected to use disciplinary action only when necessary and to place emphasis on the students' ability to grow in self-discipline.

Disciplinary action, when necessary, will be firm, fair and consistent so as to be the most effective in changing student behavior. In determining the appropriate disciplinary action, school personnel authorized to impose disciplinary penalties will consider the following:

1. The student's age
2. The nature of the offense and the circumstances, which led to the offense.
3. The student's prior disciplinary record.
4. The effectiveness of other forms of discipline.

5. Information from parents, teachers and/or others, as appropriate.
6. Other extenuating circumstances.

As a general rule, discipline will be progressive. This means that a student's first violation will usually merit a lighter penalty than subsequent violations.

If the conduct of a student is related to a disability or suspected disability, the student shall be referred to the Committee on Special Education and discipline, if warranted, shall be administered consistent with the separate requirements of this code of conduct for disciplining students with a disability or presumed to have a disability. A student identified as having a disability shall not be disciplined for behavior related to his/her disability.

In the event of disciplinary actions in response to acts of harassment, bullying and or discrimination against students by employees or students , a progressive model of student discipline shall be imposed which includes measured, balanced and age-appropriate remedies and procedures that make appropriate use of prevention, education, intervention and discipline and shall consider, among other things, the nature and severity of the offending student's behavior, the developmental age of the student, the previous disciplinary record of the student and other extenuating circumstances as well as the impact the student's behaviors had on the individual(s) who was physically injured or emotionally harmed as a result of such acts. Responses shall be reasonably calculated to end the harassment, bullying and/or discrimination, prevent recurrence and eliminate the hostile environment.

#### Penalties

Students who are found to have violated the district's code of conduct may be subject to the following penalties, either alone or in combination. The school personnel identified after each penalty are authorized to impose that penalty, consistent with the student's right to due process.

1. Oral warning – any member of the district staff
2. Written warning – teachers, bus drivers, Director of Transportation, Principal or his/her designee, Superintendent
3. Written notification to parent – bus driver, teachers, Director of Transportation, Principal or his/her designee, Superintendent
4. Detention (lunch) – teachers, Principal or his/her designee, Superintendent
5. Suspension from transportation –Principal or his/her designee, Director of Transportation, Superintendent
6. Suspension from athletic participation – coaches, athletic director, Principal or his/her designee, Superintendent
7. Suspension from social or extracurricular activities – activity director, Principal or

- his/her designee, Superintendent
8. Suspension of other privileges – Principal or his/her designee, Superintendent
  9. Restitution- coaches, athletic director, Director of Transportation, Principal or his/her designee, Superintendent
  10. Restorative justice – coaches, athletic director, Director of Transportation, Principal or his/her designee, Superintendent
  11. Alternatives-to-Suspension Program (For tobacco violations only) – Principal, or his/her designee, Superintendent.
  12. Removal from classroom by teacher – teachers, Principal or his/her designee.
  13. In-school suspension – Principal, Superintendent
  14. Short-term (five days or less) suspension from school – Principal, Superintendent, Board
  15. Long-term (more than five days) suspension from school – Assistant Superintendent, Superintendent, Board
  16. Permanent suspension from school – Superintendent, Board.

## **XI. Corporal Punishment**

Corporal punishment is any act of physical force upon a student for the purpose of punishing that student. Corporal punishment of any student by any district employee is strictly forbidden. However, in situations where alternative procedures and methods that do not involve the use of physical force cannot reasonably be used, reasonable physical force may only be used to:

1. Protect oneself, another student, teacher or any person from physical injury.
2. Protect the property of the school or others.
3. Restrain or remove a student whose behavior interferes with the orderly exercise and performance of school district functions, powers and duties, if that student has refused to refrain from further disruptive acts.

## **XII. Student Searches and Interrogations**

The board of education is committed to ensuring an atmosphere on school property and at school functions that is safe and orderly. To achieve this kind of environment, 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 the 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. In addition, the board authorizes the superintendent, building principals, the school nurse and district security officials to conduct searches of students and their belongings. Searches may take place 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. Student lockers, desks, and other school storage places may be subject to search at any time by school officials.

The authorized school official conducting the search shall be responsible for promptly recording the following information about each search:

1. Name, age and grade of student searched.
2. Reasons for the search.
3. Name of any informant(s).
4. Purpose of search (that is, what item(s) were being sought).
5. Type and scope of search.
6. Person conducting search and his or her title and position.
7. Witnesses, if any, to the search.
8. Time and location of search.
9. Results of search (that is, what items(s) were found).
10. Disposition of items found.
11. Time, manner and results of parental notification.

The Principal or his/her designee shall be responsible for the custody, control and disposition of any illegal or dangerous item taken from a student. The Principal or his/her designee shall clearly label each item taken from the student and retain control of the item(s), until the item is turned over to the police. The Principal or his or her designee shall be responsible for personally delivering dangerous or illegal items to police authorities.

### **A. Police involvement in Searches and Interrogations of Students**

District officials are committed to cooperating with police officials and other law enforcement authorities to maintain a safe school environment. Police officials, however, have limited authority to interview or search students in school or at school functions, or to use school facilities in connection with police work. Police officials may enter school property or a school function to question or search a student or to conduct a formal investigation involving students only if they have:

1. A search or an arrest warrant; or
2. Probable cause to believe a crime has been committed on school property or a school function; or
3. Been invited by school officials.

Before police officials are permitted to question or search any student, the building principal or his/her designee shall first try to notify the student's parent to give the parent the opportunity to be present during the police questioning or search. If the student's parent cannot be contacted prior to the police questioning or search, the questioning or search shall not be conducted. The principal or designee will also be present during any police questioning or search of a student of school property or at a school function.

Students who are questioned by police officials on school property or at a school function will be afforded the same rights they have outside the school. This means:

1. They must be informed of their legal rights.
2. They may remain silent if they so desire.
3. They may request the presence of an attorney.

### **Child Protective Services Investigations**

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.

All requests by child protective services to interview a student on school property shall be made directly to building principal or his/her designee. The principal or his/her designee shall decide if it is necessary and appropriate for a school official to be present during the interview, depending on the age of the student being interviewed and the nature of the allegations. If the nature of the allegations is such that it may be necessary for the student to remove any of his/her clothing in order for the child protective services worker to verify the allegations, the school-nurse or other district medical personnel must be present during that portion of the interview. No student may be required to remove his/her clothing in front of a child protective services worker or school district official of the opposite sex. A child protective services worker may not remove a student from school property without a court order, unless the worker reasonably believes that the student would be subject to danger of abuse if he/she were not removed from school before a court order can reasonably be obtained. If the worker believes the student would be subject to danger of abuse, the worker may remove the student without a court order and without the parent's consent.

### **XIII. Visitors to the Schools**

The board encourages parents and other district citizens to visit the district's schools and classrooms to observe the work of students, teachers and other staff. Since schools are a place of work and learning, however, certain limits must be set for such visits. The building principal or his/her designee is responsible for all persons in the building and on the grounds. For these reasons, the following rules apply to visitors to the schools:

1. Anyone who is not a regular staff member or student of the school will be considered a visitor.
2. All visitors to the school must report to the main office upon arrival at the school. There they will be required to sign the visitors' register and will be issued an identification badge, which must be worn at all times while in the school or on school grounds.
3. Visitors attending school functions that are open to the public, such as parent-teacher organization meetings or public gatherings, are not required to register.
4. Parents or citizens who wish to observe a classroom while school is in session are required to arrange such visits in advance with the classroom teacher(s), so that class disruption is kept to a minimum.
5. Teachers are expected not to take class time to discuss individual matters with visitors.
6. Any unauthorized person on school property will be reported to the principal or his/her designee. Unauthorized persons will be asked to leave. The police may be called if the situation warrants.
7. All visitors are expected to abide by the rules for public conduct on school property contained in this code of conduct.

### **XIV. Public Conduct on School Property**

The district is committed to providing an orderly, respectful environment that is conducive to learning. To create and maintain this kind of an environment, it is necessary to regulate public conduct on school property and at school functions. For purposes of this section of the code, "public" shall mean all persons when on school property or attending a school function including students, teachers and district personnel.

The restrictions on public conduct on school property and at school functions contained in this code are not intended to limit freedom of speech or peaceful assembly. The district recognizes that free inquiry and free expression are indispensable to the objectives of the district. The purpose of this code is to maintain public order and prevent abuse of the rights of others. All persons on school property or attending a school function shall conduct themselves in a respectful and orderly manner. In addition, all persons on school property or attending a school function are expected to be properly attired for the purpose they are on school property.

## **Prohibited Conduct**

No person, either alone or with others, shall:

1. Smoke on school property
2. Intentionally injure any person or threaten to do so.
3. Intentionally damage or destroy school district property or the personal property of a teacher, administrator, other district employee or any person lawfully on school property, including graffiti or arson.
4. Disrupt the orderly conduct of classes, school programs or other school activities.
5. Distribute or wear materials on school grounds or at school functions that are obscene, advocate illegal action, appear libelous, obstruct the rights of others, or are disruptive to the school program.
6. Intimidate, harass, bully or discriminate against any person on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion or religious practices, age, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, sex or disability on school grounds or at a school function.
7. Enter any portion of the school premises without authorization or remain in any building or facility after it is normally closed.
8. Obstruct the free movement of any person in any place to which this code applies.
9. Violate the traffic law, parking regulations or other restrictions on vehicles.
10. Possess, consume, sell, distribute or exchange alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, or be under the influence of either on school property or at a school function.
11. Possess or use weapons in or on school property or at a school function, except in the case of law enforcement officers or except as specifically authorized by the school district.
12. Loiter on or about school property.
13. Gamble on school property or at school functions.
14. Refuse to comply with any reasonable order of identifiable school district officials performing their duties.
15. Willfully incite others to commit any of the acts prohibited by this code.
16. Violate any federal or state statute, local ordinance or board policy while on school property or while at a school function.

Visitors who violate this code will be asked to leave school premises.

## **XV. Dissemination and Review**

The Board will work to ensure that the community is aware of this code of conduct by:

1. Providing copies of a summary of the code to all students in an age-appropriate plain-language version at a general school assembly held at the beginning of each school year.

2. Mailing a plain language summary of the code of conduct to all persons in parental relation to students before the beginning of school year and making such summary available thereafter upon request;
3. Providing all current teachers and other staff members with a copy of the code and a copy of any amendments to the code as soon as practicable after adoption.
4. Providing all new employees with a copy of the current code of conduct when they are first hired.
5. Making copies of the code available for review by students, parents and other community members.

The Board will sponsor an in-service education program for all district staff members to ensure the effective implementation of school policy on school conduct and discipline, including but not limited to, guidelines for promoting a safe and supportive school climate while discouraging, among other things, discrimination, bullying, and/or harassment against students by students and/or school employees, and including safe and supportive school climate concepts in the curriculum and classroom. Such training shall be designed to raise staff awareness and sensitivity to potential acts of discrimination, bullying and/or harassment and provide strategies and responses to assist staff in responding to reports and incidents of discrimination and harassment and to help discourage their reoccurrence. Training will be designed to make school employees aware of the effects of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination on students. Staff shall also receive training to assist in addressing the social patterns of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination to identify and mitigate acts of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination and to use strategies to effectively address problems of exclusion, bias and aggression in the school setting. The Superintendent may solicit the recommendations of the district staff, particularly teachers and administrators, regarding in-service programs pertaining to the management and discipline of students.

The District shall post the complete Code of Conduct (with all amendments and annual updates) on the District's website.

# COHOES CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL/HOME COMPACT

## The School

The staff and parents/guardians at the Cohoes elementary schools (Abram Lansing, Harmony Hill, and VanSchaick) have high expectations for themselves and their students. To provide the highest quality instructional program at our schools and to show how the schools and our families are working together, the staff and parents/guardians of our schools agree to implement the following programs and activities:

- The Cohoes elementary schools will provide an **academic program** that is rigorous and challenging and aligned with New York State learning standards.
- Staff will **communicate with families** on an on-going basis regarding students' academic progress.
- The Cohoes elementary schools will implement a **homework program** that emphasizes meaningful practice of instructional content and writing in all content areas.
- The Cohoes elementary schools will include **parents and guardians in the governance of the schools.**

## The Home

The staff and families of the Cohoes elementary schools agree that the expectations listed here are necessary to strengthen the communication and commitment between home and school. It is also recognized that the schools will support the community and its families in whatever manner is necessary and reasonable. Likewise, it is the family's responsibility to support the child and the school community.

- Parents/Guardians at the Cohoes elementary school will send their children to school appropriately dressed, prepared to learn, and on time.
- Parents/Guardians at the elementary schools will read to their children at least 15 minutes at night.
- Parents/Guardians at the elementary school will attend at least two parent/teacher conferences a year to discuss academic progress of their children.
- Parents/Guardians at the elementary schools will assist their children with their homework assignments on a regular basis to ensure completeness and accuracy.