



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Code of Conduct for Families, Volunteers and Visitors

AUGUST 2022



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**Alone, we can do
so little; together,
we can do so much.”**

Helen Keller

Statement of Purpose

The participation of families (parents, guardians and caregivers), volunteers and visitors in the learning process and education community is directly correlated to the level of academic success a student will attain. Understanding this vital connection, Dr. Monica E. Goldson, Chief Executive Officer, prioritizes strategies to build bridges and welcomes all. Without meaningful parent and school partnerships, efforts in isolation to increase academic achievement will be futile.

Research has maintained for over 60 years that a positive relationship between home and schools is mutually beneficial for students, families and the school community, including the following:



Benefits for Students

- Improved student achievement, including math and reading scores;
- Higher motivation to excel in school;
- Better school attendance;
- Improved behavior at home and school; and
- Better social skills and adaptation to school.



Rewards for Families

- The opportunity to closely monitor their child's performance and recognize and address any difficulty they might be having in school;
- Better relationships and communication with teachers; and
- Having a voice in decisions that enhance the academic environment of the school and improve the educational experience.



Advantages for the School Community

- Immediate access to garner family support on school initiatives;
- Improved teacher morale;
- Higher ratings of teachers by parents, which can boost their reputation in the community; and
- Involved families can become powerful allies to engage communitywide support for educational excellence in all neighborhood schools.

This Code of Conduct applies to all families, volunteers and visitors who interact with schools and offices in Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS). It also applies to those who are present at school, in person or virtually, and school-sponsored activities, meetings, and/or functions during and outside of school hours.

In order to create a climate and culture of support for all students, there is an expectation for all stakeholders to work together in ensuring that every student attains high academic achievement, positive social and emotional development and gains readiness for college, careers, and a successful and productive life.

The overarching expectation is that we work constructively together to address issues related to concerns, programs and services before they become a source of conflict. Any interaction between school personnel and families, volunteers and visitors should start with assuming good intentions in others. We also should all make a sincere effort to appreciate each other's perspective as we work together to support our children. Other positive and effective interactions should include:

- Respecting each other's time and responsibilities;
- Agreeing on a time and location to meet and/or discuss an issue;
- Listening carefully with a respectful exchange of opinions and suggestions;
- Approaching disagreements in a manner that treats others as integral parts of the decision making and encourages mutual problem solving; and
- Providing the opportunity for either party to seek a second opinion or other intervention when there is unresolved disagreement or when an answer to a difficult situation can't be reached.

Guidelines

In order to maintain an orderly, respectful and secure educational environment for students and staff, it is essential that families and visitors are aware of their responsibilities and understand that adherence to these guidelines is essential for each school and office. Penalties for lack of adherence to this Code of Conduct are enforceable by the PGCPs Department of Security Services and/or local police.

Responsibilities

1. Recognize that the education of children is a joint responsibility of families and the school community;
2. Convey a supportive attitude toward education and the district;
3. Build mutually respectful and productive relationships with administrators, teachers, school staff, bus drivers, other families and their children's friends;
4. Review the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook with their child and sign it;
5. Model, for students, appropriate behavior and adherence to policies and procedures;
6. Discuss with students expectations for adhering to classroom rules and the overall purpose while eliminating potential consequences associated with noncompliance;
7. Ensure that students are dressed and groomed in a manner consistent with the applicable school dress code;
8. Ensure that students bring only items appropriate and related to the instructional program at school;
9. Request support from appropriate school system staff to help their children to deal effectively with bullying and peer pressure;
10. Seek assistance for handling concerns, always allowing for the opportunity for school leadership to address concerns; start at the school level with the classroom teacher and then alert the principal when you have concerns with a teacher or other school-related issues;
11. Inform school officials of changes in the home situation that might affect student conduct or performance; and
12. Provide a place for study, and ensure homework assignments are completed.

Public Conduct on School Property

Schools are a place of work and learning. All persons on school property or attending a school function shall conduct themselves in a respectful and orderly manner. The building principal or their designee is responsible for all persons in the building and on the grounds. Anyone who is not a regular staff member or student of the school is considered a "visitor." All visitors are required to abide by the rules for public conduct on school property contained in PGCPs policies, procedures, and state law.

All visitors must comply with Administrative Procedure 0500 – School Visitors by providing a copy of their government-issued identification, which includes the visitor's name, date of birth and photo, to the school office to be scanned into the Visitor Management System (VMS). Persons who do not provide required identification will not be permitted on premises.

Visitors must be escorted and/or accompanied by a PGCPs employee at all times throughout their visit. Visitors are required to wear the VMS badge while at the school.

Conduct Prohibited on School Property

No person shall:

1. Act in a threatening manner (i.e., gross disrespect, threatening, using loud or offensive or profane language, swearing, or displaying temper, or causing disruption to professional or academic climate) toward any staff member or student;
2. Approach someone else's child in order to discuss an issue or chastise them. (Such an approach to a child may be seen as an assault on that child and may have legal consequences);
3. Injure any other person or threaten to do so;
4. Damage or destroy school property or the property of a teacher, administrator, other district employee or any other person lawfully on school property, including graffiti or arson;
5. Disrupt classes, school programs or other school activities;
6. Send abusive, harassing, or threatening emails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other inappropriate written communication;
7. Record or videotape any interactions within the school building where there is an expectation of privacy (classroom instruction, conversations with teachers, students, staff), unless all participants to the conversation have given their permission for the recording or videotaping;
8. Misuse social media to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, school staff, and/or other parents/students through social networking and websites;
9. Misuse social media for cyberbullying and/or to publicly humiliate another by inappropriate social network entry;
10. Disrupt school transportation or confront transportation staff on the bus, the road, in neighborhoods, or on school system grounds;
11. Distribute or wear materials on school grounds or at school functions that are suggestive and inappropriate, obscene, advocate illegal action, promote alcohol or illegal substances, appear libelous, obstruct the rights of others, or are disruptive to the school program;
12. Intimidate, harass or discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, citizenship status, marital status, religion, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or age;
13. Enter any portion of the school premises without authorization or remain in any building or facility after it is normally closed;
14. Obstruct the free movement of any person in any place to which this code applies;
15. Violate the traffic laws, parking regulations or other restrictions of vehicles while on school property;
16. Possess, consume, sell, distribute or exchange alcoholic beverages, tobacco, controlled substances, or be under the influence of either on school property or at school functions;
17. Possess or use weapons in or on school property or at any school function, except in the case of law enforcement officers;
18. Loiter on school property or at school functions;
19. Gamble on school property or at school functions;
20. Refuse to comply with any reasonable order of identifiable school district officials performing their duties;
21. Willfully incite others to commit any of the acts prohibited by this code; or
22. Violate any federal or state statute, local ordinance, or Board policy while on school property or while at a school function.

Tips for Families, Volunteers and Visitors

On some occasions, there may be strong disagreement over a school system decision, policy or procedure. Individuals may refer to PGCPs administrative procedures or inquire from their child's administrators or the Area Office if there is an appeal process for the issue. The following are tips for how to effectively approach and address concerns.

Organize Your Thoughts

Clearly state the issue or the problem you are experiencing. Make a list of questions you would like to ask. Identify several possible solutions you think would resolve your concern.

Stay Calm – Maintain a Civil Tone

Focus on the facts, not on the person with whom you are discussing the issue. Avoid blaming, demanding, and saying "should." Say "I believe...", "I feel...", rather than "You should..."

Clarify, Rather Than Assume

If you are not sure about something or what you heard, ask for an explanation or clarification. Try to understand the other person's view of the situation and the solutions they might propose.

Be Flexible

Recognize that problems can be solved in more than one way. Be open to alternative solutions.

Keep Records

Make notes of meeting dates and times, who you talked to, and what was discussed. Save copies of letters, forms and other material related to your concern.

RESOURCE: [A Guide to Addressing Questions and Concerns](#)



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Act as if what you do
makes a difference.
It does.”

William James

Consequences for Violation of the Code of Conduct

The following consequences have been established in accordance with state law and PGCPs policies and procedures. Principals or their designees and school security have the authority to enforce the Code of Conduct for Families, Volunteers and Visitors, as well as all district policies and procedures, and are authorized to determine the appropriate offense level outlined below.

Depending upon the severity of the incident, parents/guardians or visitors may be ejected from or otherwise banned from campus and participation in school-sponsored activities. In situations involving lesser infractions or where remediation is viable, a verbal warning will be provided. Should a parent/guardian or visitor fail to heed the direction issued in the verbal warning, a ban or other restrictions designed to deter the conduct will follow. No restriction, however, will prevent the parent/guardian from working collaboratively with the school to meet the child's educational needs, nor will a parent/guardian be excluded from a child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting.

Level 1 Offense

Level 1 offenses are those that do not jeopardize the safety or welfare of students or staff. Consequences are geared to deter and correct behaviors. Failure to act accordingly will result in the escalation to a Level 2 offense and consequence.

CONSEQUENCES

First Infraction: Verbal Warning

Second Infraction: PGCPs Training Session

Third Infraction: Mediation

Level 2 Offense

A parent/guardian or visitor in violation of any portion of this code that jeopardizes the academic environment and/or safety and welfare of students and staff is subject to being banned from school property for a specified period of time and will be subject to the district's actualization of its right to pursue a civil or criminal legal action.

Repeated Level 1 offenses

CONSEQUENCE

Issuance of a formal "No Trespass Letter" from PGCPs premises – this formal notice can be instituted for a quarter, semester or year at the principal's discretion.

When an individual commits a Level 1 offense (second infraction), the principal will notify the Department of Family and School Partnerships, which will facilitate appropriate training. A period of not less than 30 days will be provided to complete training. Failure to complete training requirements will result in escalation to a Level 2 offense.

At the termination of a formal ban and "No Trespass Letter" from school premises, a meeting with the principal is required and completion of an identified training session through the Department of Family and School Partnerships before privileges are restored.

Right to Appeal

Level 1 offenses are not appealable.

If an individual would like to appeal a Level 2 offense, a written request with supporting evidence must be submitted to the Instructional Director of the respective school within five calendar days of the imposition of the consequence. Contact information for Instructional Directors is provided on each school's website. Email requests are acceptable. Upon receipt of a request to appeal, an Instructional Director has five calendar days to issue a written finding to either uphold, amend or abolish the ban as written. If the Instructional Director upholds the decision of the principal, a second level of appeal is available through the Area Associate Superintendent (the CEO's designee). Prince George's County Public Schools has three Associate Superintendents as follows:

Associate Superintendent for Elementary Schools
Dr. Kasandra Lassiter | kassand.lassiter@pgcps.org | 301-952-6060

Associate Superintendent for Middle, K-8 and Public Charter Schools
Dr. David Curry | david.curry@pgcps.org | 301-952-6010

Associate Superintendent for High and Alternative Schools
Dr. Carletta Marrow | carletta.marrow@pgcps.org | 301-952-6000

A written request for review of the appeal denial must be sent to the appropriate Associate Superintendent within five calendar days of the Instructional Director's written decision. After receipt of the written request, the Associate Superintendent (CEO's designee) has five calendar days to issue a written finding. The third and final level of appeal available is to the Prince George's County Board of Education, under section 4-205 of the Education Article. These appeals must be filed within 30 calendar days of the decision issued by the CEO's designee.

Resources

Offices

[PGCPS Family and School Partnerships](#)

[Office of Compliance and Ethics for SafeSchools Training for Volunteers](#)

Administrative Procedures

[AP0500 – School Visitors](#)

[AP5090 – School Arrival and Dismissal Procedures](#)

[AP5113 – Student Attendance, Absence and Truancy](#)

[AP5113 – Attachment 1 – Attendance Codes](#)

[Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook](#)

Legal Authority

[Maryland Code, Education Article, Section 26-101– Disturbing activities at school or college; molesting or threatening students](#)

[Maryland Code, Education Article, Section 26-102 – Trespass on the grounds of a public institution of elementary, secondary, or higher education](#)

[COMAR, Sec. 13A.01.04.03. School Safety](#)

[Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#)