PGCPS

SCHOOL YEAR 2026 - 2027



Prince George's County Public Schools

EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT

www.pgcps.org

Message from Our Superintendent of Schools

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the 2026-2027 school year. As we begin this new chapter, we do so with a renewed and unwavering commitment to our ultimate goal for Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS): Excellence everywhere. Every child. Every day.

Our mission is to empower every student to achieve excellence by ensuring equitable access to high-quality learning, supportive environments, and transformative opportunities that promote each learner's strengths, identity, and limitless potential.

To turn this mission into reality, we must ensure our daily actions mirror our organizational values. The PGCPS Employee Code of Conduct is a vital tool that aligns our professional behavior with these priorities, ensuring we operate with the highest standards of integrity.

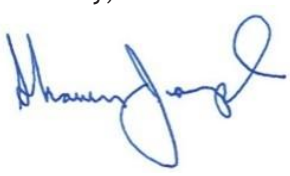
Initially developed in 2016 by the Student Safety Task Force in accordance with Maryland Education Article § 6-113.1, the Employee Code of Conduct is updated annually. These updates ensure our guidelines remain aligned with evolving policies, procedures, and—most importantly—our strategic mission to ensure equitable access to high-quality learning, supportive environments, and transformative opportunities that promote each learner's strengths, identity, and limitless potential.

Please take the time to thoroughly review the updated Employee Code of Conduct document to ensure your daily practice reflects these shared commitments.

If you have any questions regarding these guidelines, please do not hesitate to contact your labor partner (union) or reach out to the Chief Human Resources Officer at chro@pgcps.org.

Thank you for your dedication, your professionalism, and your shared commitment to the students and families of Prince George's County. Together, let's make excellence happen everywhere, for every child, every single day.

Sincerely,



Shawn Joseph, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

VISION

Excellence everywhere.
Every child. Every day.

MISSION

To empower every student to achieve excellence by ensuring equitable access to high-quality learning, supportive environments, and transformative opportunities that promote each learner's strengths, identity, and limitless potential.

CORE PURPOSE

The school system's highest priority is to prepare students to meet the demands of college and the workforce.

CORE VALUES

1. Students are our priority, and all students can achieve at high academic levels.
2. Families, students, and educators have shared responsibility for student success.
3. High expectations inspire high performance.
4. All staff share the responsibility for a safe and supportive school environment, contributing to excellence in education.
5. The support of everyone in our community is essential to the success of our schools and students, and this success enriches our community through meaningful partnerships.
6. Continuous improvement in teaching, leadership, and accountability is the key to our destiny.

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Introduction

The Employee Code of Conduct applies to all PGCPS employees …

Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) is committed to operating in a manner that builds upon our core values: students are our priority and all students can achieve at high academic levels; families, students and educators share the responsibility for student success; high expectations inspire high performance; all staff share the responsibility for a safe and supportive school environment contributing to excellence in education; the support of everyone in our community is essential to the success of our schools and students, and this success enriches our community; and continuous improvement in teaching, leadership and accountability is the key to our destiny.

The *Employee Code of Conduct* offers a summary of the expectations and standards of conduct that PGCPS expects of employees. In addition, this *Code of Conduct* provides the disciplinary steps that PGCPS utilizes to address employees' inappropriate behavior or failure to meet our expectations or standards of conduct.

The *Employee Code of Conduct* applies to all PGCPS employees, both certificated and non-certificated, full- and part-time, as well as substitutes and temporary employees. Many aspects of the Code of Conduct are based on pertinent Board policies, Administrative Procedures, and Negotiated Agreements, as well as state and Federal Laws and Regulations. The *Employee Code of Conduct* is not intended to replace these resources, but rather to provide a one document summary and reference point of employee expectations and standards of conduct that would be beneficial to all employees.

This *Code of Conduct* is not a contract, nor does it replace or supersede any Board policy or Administrative Procedure. The Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools reserve the right to modify or amend any Board policy or administrative procedure at any time. If there is any inconsistency between the contents of the *Employee Code of Conduct* and any Board policy or Administrative Procedure, the Board policy or administrative procedure will govern.

Administration of the Employee Code of Conduct

The *Employee Code of Conduct* provides the framework for the legal and system requirements that govern the expectations regarding PGCPS employee conduct. These requirements include but are not limited to the following:

1. **Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) and Other Federal and State Laws**

   The Education Article and COMAR establish the expectations for teachers, principals, assistant principals and other public school positions, which require a professional certificate from the Maryland Department of Education (MSDE) and provide standards for suspension and dismissal when those certificated employee fail to adhere to the expectations.

   Section 6-202 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland – certificated employees may be suspended or dismissed for one or more of five different reasons: immorality; misconduct in office including: a knowing failure to report suspected child abuse and neglect in violation of Section 5-704 of the Family Law Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland – insubordination; incompetence; and willful neglect of duty.

   If school vehicle drivers and attendants do not adhere to the required expectations, state law disqualifies them from driving and/or employment.

   COMAR 13A.06.07.07 – School Vehicle Drivers

   COMAR 13A.06.07.08 – School Vehicle Attendants

   Additionally, numerous federal and state laws set forth expectations for all public school employees in terms of the security of another's person, property, or reputation; financial and program accountability; reporting child abuse and neglect; confidentiality of student and personnel records; and civil rights and nondiscrimination.

Employees should meet the expected standards of behavior ...

2. **Negotiated Collective Bargaining Agreements**

   PGCPS has negotiated agreements with the following associations:

   - Prince George's County Educators' Association (PGCEA Unit I)
   - Association of Supervisory and Administrative School Personnel (ASASP Unit II)
   - Association of Supervisory and Administrative School Personnel (ASASP Unit III)
   - Association of Classified Employees, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (ACE-AFSCME), AFL-CIO Local 2250
   - Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 400 PG, CTW-CLC

   These negotiated agreements set forth expectations regarding employee conduct, employee due process rights and provisions that recognize that PGCPS may discipline employees for cause. This requirement demonstrates that employees should meet the expected standards of behavior, and failure to do so may constitute cause for employee discipline or dismissal.

3. **Board Policies and Administrative Procedures**

   PGCPS policies and administrative procedures establish the standards and create expectations for employee behavior in a wide variety of areas, including but not limited to: interactions with students, reporting suspected child abuse and neglect, fiscal responsibility, ethical and moral standards, confidentiality, nondiscrimination, etc.

   It is the responsibility of all employees to demonstrate behavior that meets the expectations of federal and state laws and regulations, negotiated collective bargaining agreements, and PGCPS policies and administrative procedures. Failure to meet these expectations may result in the use of employee discipline provisions under the collective bargaining agreements, or for certificated employees, the suspension and discharge procedures under Section 6-202 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland as appropriate under the circumstances. In some situations, more than one system that governs employees' expectations may be appropriate. Such actions are initiated and determined on a case-by-case basis by PGCPS, subject to grievance and appeal procedures provided by the law, Board policies, administrative procedures, and the negotiated collective bargaining agreements.

INOVA Employee Assistance Program

Finding a balance between personal well-being and work environment responsibilities is important. If you are experiencing problems that may hinder your ability to meet these expectations, please advise your supervisor immediately. Please consider taking advantage of the Inova Employee Assistance Program.

The Inova Employee Assistance Program is a valuable tool to assist in addressing life issues that may adversely impact work. All employees can receive up to four free and confidential counseling sessions for personal and work-related concerns with the Inova Employee Assistance Program.

Receive up to four free and confidential counseling sessions for personal and work-related concerns.

Inova Employee Assistance Program
1-800-346-0110

TOLL-FREE:	800-346-0110
WEBSITE:	www.inova.org/eap
USERNAME:	pgcps
PASSWORD:	prince

If you require help in these regards or would like to review additional resources, you can access this program by telephone (1-800-346-0110) 24 hours a day, seven (7) days a week. You may also access it online at www.inovaeap.com (enter the username PGCPS and password PRINCE).

WHATEVER YOU NEED,
WE ARE HERE TO HELP.

Just call or log on to get started.

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Expectations for Employee Conduct

PGCPS expects all employees to perform their work with the necessary skill and knowledge; maintain the highest standards of responsible and ethical conduct; and obey all applicable laws, regulations, policies and procedures. Under no circumstance may any employee engage in any of the following activities:

- Immorality
- Misconduct in office (*which includes knowingly failing to report suspected child abuse or neglect*)
- Insubordination
- Incompetence
- Willful neglect of duty

Whenever employees face a matter that requires a decision concerning their behavior, PGCPS expects them to consider whether it might violate law, regulation, policy or administrative procedure. Just as important, employees should not engage in any action or conduct that threatens the safety of students, fellow employees, or the broader community; undermines the employee's professional integrity; and/or makes them unfit to perform their assigned duties.

The following pages provide specific examples of the behavior that PGCPS expects from all of its employees, as well as inappropriate or disruptive behavior that warrants correction or discipline. An employee's failure to perform expected behaviors, as well as an employee's performance of inappropriate behaviors (including but not limited to the items listed on the following pages), may result in the employee receiving disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or termination.

Employees should not engage in any action or conduct that threatens the safety of students ...

Employees should understand that not all inappropriate or unethical conduct may be specifically referenced in this document. The examples on the following pages are illustrative yet non-exhaustive. Inappropriate conduct that is not listed, however, may warrant disciplinary action. Please note that the standards for employee conduct set forth in the Employee Code of Conduct also apply to e-mail, social media, text messages, message apps, and other electronic communications.

Expected Conduct in the Work Environment

All persons employed by PGCPS including members of the Board of Education (Board) are expected to behave honestly; diligently fulfill their job responsibilities; adhere to all federal and state laws and regulations, PGCPS policies and procedures, and ethical standards governing their work; and comply with laws and regulations and PGCPS policies and procedures outside of work, where failure to do so affects their fitness to perform their job.

Discrimination undermines our community's long-standing efforts to create, foster, and promote equity, inclusion, and acceptance for all. The Board is committed to providing and maintaining an educational and workplace environment free from any form of unlawful discrimination The Board will not tolerate discrimination on the basis of personal characteristics, including race, color, national origin, citizenship status, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or age.

Do your part to create a positive learning and workplace culture for you, your students and your colleagues. Treat everyone with respect and equality. Keeping that goal in mind will help make sure that you comply with antidiscrimination laws. When looking at your own biases and behavior toward students and your colleagues, first acknowledge your feelings. Spend time thinking about your own prejudices. Realize that you interpret and judge others through your own cultural lens. We can reduce our biases by recognizing that we have them and working to change some of our attitudes. Make an effort to see members of stereotyped groups as individuals.

Board Policies:
https://offices.pgcps.org/generalcounsel/boardpolicies/ bp0000.aspx

Administrative Procedures:
https://offices.pgcps.org/administrativeprocedures/

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Examples of Expected Conduct in the Work Environment

Employees should understand that not all inappropriate or unethical conduct may be specifically referenced in this document.

1. Follow legal requirements and PGCPS rules regarding security and reporting requirements for mandatory tests, such as tests administered by or through MSDE.
   - **Administrative Procedure 6139** – Test Security and Data Reporting
2. Accurately record student attendance and tardiness in the student information system daily and provide students the opportunity to make up missed assignments when lawfully absent from school or class.
   - **Administrative Procedure 5113** – Student Attendance, Absence, and Truancy
3. Complete work assignments in an appropriate, satisfactory, and timely manner and follow PGCPS administrative procedures, and school and department expectations and guidelines, as well as instructions, directions and orders of supervisors and administrators.
4. Report to work on time as scheduled, complete assigned hours, follow leave procedures and use work time for performance of PGCPS responsibilities.
   - **Administrative Procedure 4153** – Time and Attendance
5. When teleworking the duties, responsibilities, and conditions of employment remain the same as when working at PGCPS's official work location and all requirements of teleworking must be followed.
   - **Administrative Procedure 4165** – Teleworking For Selected Employees
6. When teleworking use a PGCPS-approved background, appropriate platform background, or blurred background. Additionally, when in a virtual meeting, the laptop or computer camera must be active. When an in-person meeting is scheduled on a day scheduled for telework, if there is not a virtual option, employees are expected to attend the meeting in person.
7. Follow legal requirements and PGCPS rules on ethical behavior and avoid conflicts of interest.
   - **Board Policy 0107** – Ethics Regulations
   - **Administrative Procedure 4160** – Employee Conflict of Interest
   - **Board Policy 0109** – Financial Impropriety, Improper Conduct & Whistleblower Protection
   - **Administrative Procedure 2200** – Financial Impropriety, Improper Conduct and Whistleblower Protection
8. Maintain the confidentiality of information you obtain through your work, including but not limited to: legal records; medical information; in certain instances commercial and financial transaction information; open investigations; executive-level communication; and personally identifiable information (PII) which consist of education records for students and personnel records for employees, such as: social security numbers, employee identification numbers, home contact information, date of birth, race, sex, marital status, personal financial information, state identification card numbers, medical records, etc.
   - **Board Policy 0107** – Ethics Regulations
   - **Board Policy 5125** – Student Information and Education Records
   - **Administrative Procedure 1121** – Release and Dissemination of Information
   - **Administrative Procedure 3050** – Confidential Data & Personally Identifiable Information (PII)
   - **Administrative Procedure 5125** – Individual Student School-Based Records

6 *Maintain the confidentiality of information you obtain through your work ...*

Examples of Expected Conduct in the Work Environment (cont.)

9. If your professional position gives you access to PII and confidential information, it is your responsibility to only give access to this information to people with permission to access it, has a "need to know" the PII or confidential information, and the PII and confidential information is related to the performance of PGCPS job duties.
   - **Administrative Procedure 3050** – Confidential Data & Personally Identifiable Information (PII)
10. Limit access to PII and confidential information by:
    - Protecting PGCPS computer system usernames and passwords
    - Storing documents with PII and confidential information in locked cabinets
    - Keeping only the necessary amount of PII and confidential information
    - Confirming the identity of people who request access to PII and confidential information within PGCPS
    - Properly disposing of documents with PII and confidential information
    - Reporting unauthorized access of PII and confidential information immediately
    - Asking your supervisor if you are unsure if PII or confidential information may be shared.
    - Never input student PII or confidential PGCPS information into AI tools.
      - **Administrative Procedure 3050** – Confidential Data & Personally Identifiable Information (PII)
      - **Administrative Procedure 0123** – Artificial Intelligence Use and Governance
11. Comply with all requirements for submitting any requests for reimbursement of travel and related expenses directly related to official PGCPS business.
    - **Administrative Procedure 4133** – Local Reimbursable Travel
    - **Administrative Procedure 4134** – Non-Local Reimbursable Travel
12. Complete, update and maintain all required reports on a timely basis and follow program and financial reporting guidelines. These administrative procedures are illustrative yet non-exhaustive.
    - **Administrative Procedure 2600** – Records and Documents Management Program
    - **Administrative Procedure 2805.5** – Vehicle Accident Reporting
      Administrative Procedure 3260 – Property Disposal
    - **Administrative Procedure 5121.1** – Grading and Reporting for Elementary Schools, Early Childhood Through Grade Five
    - **Administrative Procedure 3522.1** – Integrated Pest Management and Termite Control Services
    - **Administrative Procedure 5121.2** – Grading and Reporting for Middle Schools, Grade Six Through Grade Eight
    - **Administrative Procedure 5121.3** – Grading and Reporting for High Schools, Grade Nine Through Grade Twelve
13. Do not release Personally Identifiable Information (PII) or confidential information without permission.
14. Attend and participate fully in all required PGCPS job-related professional development activities, and complete all coursework and training to maintain valid certification/ licensure required to hold the PGCPS position to which you are assigned.
15. Report known or suspected instances of fraud, false claims, false statements, bribery, theft, or embezzlement of PGCPS funds.
    - **Board Policy 0109** – Financial Impropriety, Improper Conduct and Whistleblower Protection
    - **Administrative Procedure 2200** – Financial Impropriety, Improper Conduct and Whistleblower Protection
    - **Hotline Policy and Procedures**
16. Exercise fiscal responsibility with and properly account for PGCPS funds, safeguard PGCPS property including records and data, and respect other people's property.
    - **Administrative Procedure 2200** – Financial Impropriety, Improper Conduct and Whistleblower Protection
17. Upon voluntary or involuntary separation of employment with PGCPS, return all PGCPS property, such as: instructional resources, documents, files, records, telephones, data, equipment, computers, keys, photo ID badge, etc.
18. Personal electric vehicles shall not be charged using PGCPS power sources. Unauthorized charging could lead to issues with billing, taxation and safety concerns.
    - **Board Policy 0109** – Financial Impropriety, Improper Conduct and Whistleblower Protection
    - **Administrative Procedure 2200** – Financial Impropriety, Improper Conduct and Whistleblower Protection

Follow legal requirements and PGCPS rules on ethical behavior and avoid conflicts of interest.

Examples of Expected Conduct in the Work Environment (cont.)

19. Follow legal requirements and PGCPS rules prohibiting use of alcohol, tobacco, vaping, e-cigarettes use and other drugs on PGCPS property.
    - **Board Policy 0129** – Possession and Use of Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs in School Property
    - **Drug Free School and Communities Amendment of 1989**
    - **Maryland Clean Indoor Air Act of 2007 (amended 2024)**
    - **Education Article 4-124 :: 26-103 :: Criminal Law Article 5-627 of the Annotated Code of Maryland**
    - **COMAR 13A.02.04**
    - **Administrative Procedure 2300** – Tobacco-Free School Environment
20. Follow legal requirements and PGCPS rules concerning school safety and security.
    - **Board Policy 0126** – Student Safety and Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse, and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect
    - **Board Policy 2801** – Safe and Supportive Schools
    - **Administrative Procedure 2512.1** – Attention to Fire and Safety Inspections
    - **Administrative Procedure 2801** – Safety Program Responsibilities
    - **Administrative Procedure 2805.6** – Safety Inspection
    - **Administrative Procedure 6114.1** – Fire Drills
21. Submit to alcohol or controlled substance testing if a school vehicle driver or employee performing safety-sensitive functions when directed.
    - **Administrative Procedure 4110** – Alcohol and Controlled Substances Testing for School Vehicle Drivers and Employees Performing Safety Sensitive Functions
22. Follow legal requirements and PGCPS rules regarding appropriate use of PGCPS websites, e-mail, and other communication technology, as well as test security and data reporting requirements.
    - **Administrative Procedure 0700** – Information Technology Services – Acceptable Usage Guidelines
    - **Administrative Procedure 0701** – Information Technology Services – Employee E-Mail Procedures
    - **Board Policy 4126** – Employee Use of Social Media and Portable Electronic Devices
    - **Administrative Procedure 4126** – Employee Use of Social Media, and Portable Electronic Devices
23. Provide true, complete, and accurate information in a resume, interview, or other employment material collected before, during and after the hiring process.
    - **Board Policy 0109** – Financial Impropriety, Improper Conduct & Whistleblower Protection
    - **Administrative Procedure 2200** – Financial Impropriety, Improper Conduct and Whistleblower Protection
24. Immediately self-report criminal arrests, pending charges, charges, or convictions.
    - **Administrative Procedure 4215** – Criminal History Checks, Employee Self-Reporting of Arrests, Criminal Charges, CPS Investigations and Findings & Incarceration
25. Follow PGCPS rules and state election laws regarding participation in political campaigns, partisan election activities, and the distribution of political or partisan materials.
    - **Board Policy 4135** – Activities-Organizations – Political
26. Respond honestly to a work-related inquiry by PGCPS, law enforcement, or other authorized investigative officials.
27. Operate school-sponsored trips involving students within PGCPS rules and with appropriate approval.
    - **Administrative Procedure 6153** – Student Trips
    - **Administrative Procedure 6153.1** – Student Field Trips Involving Foreign Travel
28. Conduct your private life activities (including social media activities) in a manner that is not prejudicial to your effectiveness as a PGCPS employee and recognize that criminal, dishonest, and other inappropriate activities may have an adverse impact on your employment with PGCPS.
29. Wear the PGCPS issued identification badge at all times while on school grounds.
    - **Administrative Procedure 4223** – Access and Photo Identification Badges
30. Ensure all use of professional or personal social media sites communicate appropriately about employees, students or parents/guardians.
    - **Board Policy 4126** – Employee Use of Social Media and Personal Electronic Devices
    - **Administrative Procedure 4126** – Employee Use of Social Media and Personal Electronic Devices

Examples of Expected Conduct in the Work Environment (cont.)

31. Dress in a manner appropriate for an employee's job description, daily duties and the educational and office setting. PGCPS expects all employees to present themselves in a professional manner with respect to clothing, personal hygiene, and appearance.
32. Where employees are provided uniforms or reimbursed for the purchase of uniforms, they are expected to wear them each duty day.
33. Adhere to all applicable copyright laws and guidelines.
    - **Administrative Procedure 6160** – Copyright Guidelines
34. As specified by the administration, employees must appropriately wear the required PPE items at all times in their work locations.
35. Employees share the responsibility for the health, safety, and general welfare of students and employees and for establishing and sustaining a safe and supportive school climate.
    - **Board Policy 0126** –Student Safety and Prevention: Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse, and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect
    - **Board Policy 2801** – Safe and Supportive Schools
36. Report all known or suspected retaliation against whistleblowers.
    - **Board Policy 0109** – Financial Impropriety, Improper Conduct & Whistleblower Protection
    - **Administrative Procedure 2200** –Financial Impropriety, Improper Conduct and Whistleblower Protection
37. Submit correct information to PGCPS or on behalf of PGCPS; submit correct requests for leave, reimbursement, expenses, or pay; and only accept compensation for hours worked or duties performed.
    - **Board Policy 0109** – Financial Impropriety, Improper Conduct & Whistleblower Protection
    - **Administrative Procedure 2200** – Financial Impropriety, Improper Conduct and Whistleblower Protection
38. Report all potential conflicts of interests including the supervision of any relative, spouse, in-law, or any employee with whom you have had an intimate personal relationship.
    - **Administrative Procedure 4160** – Employee Conflicts of Interest
39. Report all known or suspected retaliation against whistleblowers.
    - **Board Policy 0109** – Financial Impropriety, Improper Conduct & Whistleblower Protection
    - **Administrative Procedure 2200** – Financial Impropriety, Improper Conduct and Whistleblower Protection
40. Use technology components only for the following reasons:
    - Educational and Academic communications and responsibilities;
    - Administrative and business functions related to school and system operations;
    - Communication with authorized individuals for school system-related objectives; and
    - Accessing digital tools, resources, and websites approved by PGCPS.
    - **Board Policy 0115** – Information Technology Services - Acceptable Usage Guidelines
41. Safeguard access to the PGCPS network and refrain from disclosing usernames and passwords that would allow unauthorized access to PGCPS computer systems.
    - **Board Policy 0117** – Information Technology Services - Information Security
    - **Administrative Procedure 3050** – Confidential Data and Personally Identifiable Information (PII)
42. Artificial Intelligence (AI) will only be used as a supplemental tool by teachers.
    - **Board Policy 0117** – Information Technology Services - Information Security
    - **Administrative Procedure 0123** – Artificial Intelligence Use and Governance.
43. Only use PGCPS approved AI systems.
    - **Board Policy 0123** – Artificial Intelligence
    - **Administrative Procedure 0123 -** Artificial Intelligence Use and Governance
44. Any use of AI must be cited, just as with any other source, and may not be submitted as the original work. It is the responsibility of staff to check the accuracy of the information provided by an AI platform.
    - **Board Policy 0123** – Artificial Intelligence
45. Obtain adult permission to enable AI companion features when attending a meeting.
46. Submit a report digitally via the Online Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Application when the employee has reason to suspect that a student has been subjected to bullying, harassment, or intimidation.
    - **Board Policy 5143 and Administrative Procedure 5143** – Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation

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Expected Conduct with Students

As reflected in Board Policy 4400, employees, independent contractors, and volunteers in the PGCPS are expected to maintain courteous and professional relationships with students. They have a responsibility to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning through the maintenance of physical and emotional boundaries with students.

Employees should be aware that all PGCPS buses are equipped with audiovisual camera surveillance, and the audiovisual recordings may be used as part of an investigation.

Examples of Expected Conduct with Students

1. Engage in positive, respectful approaches with students who are unable to pay the necessary cost of PGCPS-provided meals.
   - **Board Policy 5080** – Prohibition of Systemic Meal Shaming Practices and Board Regulation on a Universal Meals Program for Early Childhood, Primary, and Intermediate Grade Levels
2. Treat all students fairly, equitably, and with respect, regardless of their race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, national origin, citizenship, religion, immigration status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, family/parental status, marital status, age, physical or mental disability, poverty or socioeconomic status, language, or other legally or constitutionally protected attributes or affiliations.
   - **Board Policy 0101** – Educational Equity
   - **Board Policy 0104** – Title IX - Discrimination and Harassment on the Basis of Sex
   - **Administrative Procedure 0104** – Title IX, Discrimination and Harassment on the Basis of Sex
   - **Board Policy 0125** - Nondiscrimination
   - **Administrative Procedure 4170** – Discrimination and Harassment
3. Use positive behavior intervention strategies and supports to guide student behavior and appropriate responsive strategies to maintain a safe and secure learning environment.
   - **Administrative Procedure 5062** – Student Behavior Interventions
4. Respect students' personal boundaries by maintaining proper space and demonstrate appropriate behaviors that create a safe environment for students to grow and learn.
5. As soon as possible, make an oral report of abuse or neglect of children or vulnerable adults when suspected; submit a written report within 48 hours of the oral report; and do not interfere with the making of reports of abuse or neglect.
   - **Board Policy 0126** – Student Safety and Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse, and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect
   - **Administrative Procedure 5145** – Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect
6. Use PGCPS-approved group applications to communicate with students and parents via phone or e-mail.
   - **Administrative Procedure 4219** – Inappropriate Interactions Among Students and Employees, Independent Contractors and Volunteers
7. Protect the privacy of personally identifiable information contained in all students' educational records.
   - **Board Policy 5125** – Student Information and Education Records
   - **Administrative Procedure 3050** – Confidential Data & Personally Identifiable Information (PII)
   - **Administrative Procedure 5125** – Individual Student School-Based Records
8. All students should be supervised at all times during the school day and on school property.
9. People-First Language shall be used in all written and spoken communications.
   - **Board Policy 0121** – People-First Language
   - **Administrative Procedure 0121** – People-First Language

Use positive behavior intervention strategies and supports to guide student behavior ...

All Employees Shall Engage in Appropriate Physical Interactions with Students

Examples of inappropriate physical interactions with students include but is not limited to:

1. Hitting or kicking;
2. Throwing objects;
3. Pulling and/or grabbing the student's clothing and/or backpack;
4. Kicking or striking furniture, throwing objects, or any other action done in an attempt to physically or emotionally intimidate the students;
5. Touching that results in bruise, scratching, etc.;
6. Tickling students;
7. Kissing students;
8. Any type of massage given by or to a student;
9. Corporal punishment or other inappropriate student disciplinary practice such as shaking, slapping, shoving, or pinching; ostracizing, or withholding food, light, or medical care; forcing the student to eat food they do not want; withholding bathroom privileges, excessive time out, excessive exercising, or locking the student out of the classroom or school;
10. Physical restraint of students, except when consistent with techniques and/or strategies authorized in PGCPS- sponsored Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) training and the employee is trained and certified to use CPl; or
11. Any other action that would cause physical injury, bodily harm or emotionally intimidate students.

- **Administrative Procedure 4219** – Inappropriate Interactions Among Students and Employees, Independent Contractors and Volunteers

All Employees Shall Engage in Appropriate Verbal Interactions with Students

Examples of inappropriate verbal interactions with students includes but is not limited to:

1. Name-calling or using profanity;
2. Excessive yelling;
3. Discussing intimate details of one's personal life;
4. Encouraging students to keep secrets from other adults;
5. Sexual or offensive humor;
6. Shaming, belittling, or derogatory/ negative remarks about a student, including negative comments about the student's physique, body development, dress, family, or academic achievement;
7. Harsh language that may threaten, degrade, or humiliate students; and
8. Any other conduct specifically prohibited by law.

- **Administrative Procedure 4219** – Inappropriate Interactions Among Students and Employees, Independent Contractors and Volunteers

Employees share the responsibility for the health, safety, and general welfare of students and employees and for establishing and sustaining a safe and supportive school climate.

PGCPS buses are equipped with audiovisual camera surveillance, and the audiovisual recordings ...

All Employees Should Engage in Appropriate Relationships with Students

Examples of inappropriate relationships with students, include but is not limited to:

1. Being alone with a student in a room with a closed or locked door.
2. Being alone with a student in a room with the lights off on PGCPS property or any time the employee is serving in his or her capacity as an employee.
3. Covering up the window in a door, unless for a lockdown.
4. Meeting with students in non-work settings (e.g., the library, the mall, a coffee shop) absent another employee being present and without parent/guardian permission.
5. Using personal, non-PGCPS accounts or devices – such as cell phones, tablets, and computers – to text, e-mail, or otherwise communicate with students without a supervisor's or manager's prior approval and/or provide students with private cell phone numbers or e-mail addresses.
6. Associating or participating with students in any setting or activity that involves the use of alcohol, tobacco, vaping, e-cigarettes or drugs.
7. Sponsoring parties for students outside of school unless as part of an extracurricular activity that is appropriately supervised by additional staff members.
8. Sending students on personal errands.
9. Allowing students to drive the employee's personal or PGCPS-issued vehicle.
10. Allowing students to ride in the employee's personal or PGCPS-issued vehicle without prior supervisor and parent approval, with the exception of school transportation vehicles such as school buses.
11. Buying gifts for or providing money to students without a supervisor/manager's prior approval. and parental consent.
12. Allowing any student, without cause, under your charge to engage in behavior that would not be tolerated if done by other students.
13. Knowingly grant students access to any portion of the employee's personal social networking website or webpage that is not accessible to the general public (e.g., becoming a "friend" on Facebook, follower on Twitter, or similar access); or which includes discussions of the employee's private life that would be inappropriate to discuss with a student at school.
14. Engaging in abuse or neglect of any child or vulnerable adult, including grooming behaviors through which an adult or a person in a position of authority builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of exploitation or other abuse.
    - **Administrative Procedure 4219** – Inappropriate Interactions Among Students and Employees, Independent Contractors and Volunteers
15. Entering or using student restrooms on PGCPS property during the school day, subject to the exceptions outlined in Administrative Procedure 4221.
    - **Administrative Procedure 4221** – Employee and Adult Use of Student Restrooms, Locker Rooms, and Designated Changing Areas
16. Retaliating against a victim, witness, or bystander who has reported bullying, harassment and/or intimidation
17. Bullying, harassing or intimidating students.
    - **Administrative Procedure 4219** – Inappropriate Interactions Among Students and Employees, Independent Contractors and Volunteers

Respect students' personal boundaries by maintaining proper space and demonstrate appropriate behaviors that create a safe environment for students to grow and learn.

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Demonstrate appropriate behaviors that create a safe environment for students to grow and learn.

Sexual Relations with Students is Strictly Prohibited

Examples of prohibited sexual relations with students include but is not limited to:

1. Touching or fondling;
2. Kissing;
3. Phone calls, written communications (including but not limited to: letters, notes, electronic communication, e-mails, text messages, social media), or visual media of an intimate or sexual nature;
4. Allowing, permitting, encouraging, or engaging in obscene or pornographic discussion (oral or written), display, or photography;
5. Showing pornography to PGCPS students, or involving children in or with pornography;
6. Introducing, viewing, or distributing pornography on PGCPS property or during any PGCPS activity;
7. Sending offensive or sexually explicit pictures, notes, cartoons, or jokes;
8. Accepting or giving gifts of a sexual or intimate nature;
9. Filming or depicting of a child as prohibited by law;
10. Communications that include intentional sexual innuendos;
11. Any kind of sexual penetration, sexual molestation, sexual exploitation;
12. Sexual intercourse; and
13. Any other conduct that is specifically prohibited by law.

- **Administrative Procedure 4218** – Dating and Sexual Relationships Among Students and Employees, Independent Contractors and Volunteers

Treat all students fairly, equitably, and with respect, regardless of their race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, national origin, citizenship, religion, immigration status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, family/parental status, marital status, age, physical or mental disability, poverty or socioeconomic status, language, or other legally or constitutionally protected attributes or affiliations.

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Expected Conduct in the Virtual Environment with Students

As reflected in Board Policy 4400, employees, independent contractors, and volunteers in the PGCPS are expected to maintain courteous and professional relationships with students. They have a responsibility to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning through the maintenance of physical and emotional boundaries with students. Please note that these standards also apply to e-mail, social media, text messages, message apps, and other electronic communications, including the virtual learning environment.

Examples of Expected Conduct in the Virtual Environment with Students

1. Access Zoom through the Staff Portal to ensure that the PGCPS licensed Zoom account is utilized.
2. Always announce when an instructional session is being recorded.
3. Utilize student video response tools, such as Screencastify and Flipgrid, to allow students to share their response via individual short video recordings.
4. Always video conference from locations where the background is appropriate and the location is quiet.
5. Dress professionally when conducting a virtual instructional session.
6. Inform parents about the plan to utilize break-out rooms.
7. Supervise break-out rooms by popping in and out and observing students' online behavior every 5 minutes.
8. Request written permission for a student to participate in a live one-on-one video/virtual session with you.
9. Provide written notice to the parents/guardians of students receiving IEP or 504 services in a live one-on-one video/virtual session.
10. Document all one-on-one sessions in a log that includes staff name, student name, date, time and reason for the session.

Examples of Inappropriate Conduct in the Virtual Environment

1. Recording student faces and voices, unless when teaching a Performing Arts class or a Career Technology Education (CTE) class or as a record as part of NBCT program requirement and with the appropriate content supervisor/department's permission.
2. Conducting virtual instructional sessions in pajamas inappropriate clothing or non-professional attire or with background visual and auditory distractions or inappropriate backgrounds.
3. Recording break-out rooms.
4. Conducting a live one-on-one virtual/video session without parent/guardian written permission.
5. Conducting one-on-one virtual/video sessions with a student outside of school hours, unless the parent/guardian provide written consent for each session.
6. Posting a link to your instructional Zoom meeting on social media or other public locations.
7. Enabling AI companion features when students are included in a meeting.

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Expected Conduct with Colleagues, Parents/Guardians, and the Community

Employees are expected to treat parents/guardians, other employees, and members of the community professionally and respectfully and comply with all nondiscrimination laws and policies in their relationships with other adults.

It is equally critical that all employees have an awareness, understanding, and tolerance of others' interests, viewpoints, cultures, and backgrounds.

Examples of Expected Conduct with Colleagues, Parents/Guardians, and the Community

1. Treat each other with civility and mutual respect.
   - **Administrative Procedure 4185** – Workplace Bullying
2. Create a welcoming environment for parents/guardians and the school community.
   - **Board Policy 0102** – Culturally Proficient Schools and Central Offices
   - **Administrative Procedure 0102** – Culturally Responsive Schools and Central Offices
   - **Administrative Procedure 4126** – Employee Use of Social Media
3. Promote engagement of parents/guardians in their children's education.
   - **Board Policy 0105** – Parent, Family and Community Involvement
4. Acknowledge and/or respond to email and phone communications within 48 business hours.
5. Use collaborative and interest-based strategies rather than positional or adversarial approaches.
6. Provide and receive feedback constructively and respectfully.
7. Provide appropriate supervision of visitors, volunteers and contractors on PGCPS property.
   - **Administrative Procedure 0500** – School Visitors
   - **Administrative Procedure 4215** – Criminal History Checks, Employee Self-Reporting of Arrests, Criminal Charges, CPS Investigations and Findings & Incarceration
   - **Administrative Procedure 4216.6** – Volunteer Services
   - **Administrative Procedure 4219** – Inappropriate Interactions Among Students and Employees, Independent Contractors and Volunteers
8. People-First Language shall be used in all written and spoken communications.
   - **Board Policy 0121** – People-First Language
9. Be respectful of diverse opinions and beliefs of other employees, parents/guardians, and others in the school community.
   - **Board Policy 0102** – Culturally Proficient Schools and Central Offices
   - **Administrative Procedure 0102** – Culturally Responsive Schools and Central Offices
10. Treat all parents/guardians, coworkers, supervisors, or other citizens fairly and equitably regardless of race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, national origin, citizenship, religion, immigration status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, family/ parental status, marital status, age, physical or mental disability, poverty or socioeconomic status, language, or other legally or constitutionally protected attributes or affiliations.
    - **Administrative Procedure 4170** – Discrimination and Harassment
    - **Board Policy 4185** – Workplace Bullying
    - **Board Policy 0125** – Nondiscrimination

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Progressive Discipline

PGCPS is committed to fair, impartial and consistent treatment of employees in the disciplinary process.

Nondisciplinary Corrective Actions

In some circumstances, a supervisor may determine that a formal disciplinary action is not needed; however, the employee's behavior requires that the supervisor explain and clarify the expectations for future behavior. In these circumstances, the supervisor may first discuss with the employee the expectations followed up with written verbal counseling (written follow-up to a verbal conversation), both of which describe the expectations about the employee's future conduct. The focus is on ensuring that the employee understands the expectations.

Disciplinary Actions

Typical disciplinary actions include the following:

- Written reprimand
- Suspension
- Termination

PGCPS is not obligated to use any specific level of progressive discipline or to use the disciplinary actions in the order listed above. Progressive discipline is a flexible process. The particular facts of each situation determine which of the above actions will be appropriate. In determining the specific level of discipline for each case, the following considerations may be weighed:

- The number of different offenses involved
- The seriousness of the offense and the evidence available
- Time between prior disciplinary actions, if applicable
- Prior work history of the employee
- Performance evaluations
- Mitigating factors

Lack of knowledge of the Employee Code of Conduct or applicable policies and procedures is not a defense to a charge of misconduct. Except for serious violations, generally the lowest appropriate level of disciplinary action should be utilized and then progress to a more severe level after a less severe disciplinary action has been applied and proven to be ineffective.

However, a more serious violation may warrant suspension or termination, even for a first-time offense, or repeated offenses, depending on the situation. This could also happen when the infraction violates a standard of conduct that is not expressly referenced in this publication but involves common-sense application of governing principles or criminal law.

Process for Cases Involving Suspected Child Abuse Other Criminal Activity and PGCPS Investigations

In any case in which an employee suspects a PGCPS employee of child abuse, child sexual abuse, or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult, an oral report must be made as soon as possible to Child Protective Services (CPS) at the Prince George's County Department of Social Services.

Within 48 hours after the individual developed a suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult had been subjected to child abuse, child sexual abuse or neglect, a written report must be filed with CPS and a copy of the report must be sent to the State's Attorney for Prince George's County. Additionally, employees should notify their supervisor or appropriate administrator.

The supervisor or administrator should enter a case into the Employee Incident Tracking System (EITS) and include the copy of the report (Form PS-60) sent to CPS, any written statements obtained, video footage if available, and any other information that could be pertinent for Security Services and the Office of Employee and Labor Relations Office (ELRO) to adequately review the incident.

In cases of child abuse, child sexual abuse and neglect allegations in which CPS is investigating, the Department of Security Services in consultation with ELRO also will conduct an investigation. An investigation by the Department of Security Services will be conducted for matters involving criminal investigations by a law enforcement agency.

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Lack of knowledge of the Employee Code of Conduct or applicable policies and procedures is not a defense to a charge of misconduct.

In every case of alleged child abuse, child sexual abuse and neglect the Department of Security Services and the ELRO will conduct an internal investigation consistent with all applicable Board of Education policies and PGCPS administrative procedures and recommend appropriate discipline.

An investigation will be conducted even when CPS or the Prince George's County Police Department (PGCPD) screens out or closes the cases without taking action and/or the State's Attorney for Prince George's County declines to bring criminal charges because such cases may involve violations of Board policies, PGCPS administrative procedures, negotiated agreements, or other guidance.

While any investigations by CPS, PGCPD or another external agency is pending, PGCPS may not interview witnesses, alleged victims or alleged perpetrators. In addition, PGCPS must conduct all internal investigations in a manner that is fully cooperative with the external agencies that are investigating and that does not interfere with or jeopardize the external investigation.

Other critical incidents involving suspected criminal activity, such as drug distribution or use of weapons on PGCPS property, require reporting to law enforcement agencies. In cases of criminal activity, the Department of Security Services and ELRO may conduct an internal investigation in a manner that is fully cooperative with law enforcement agencies that are investigating and that does not interfere with or jeopardize the external investigation.

All PGCPS employees are expected to cooperate during the course of a PGCPS investigation. This includes, but is not limited to, investigation and/or fact finding conducted by the following offices: Employee and Labor Relations, Safety and Security, Equity Assurance, General Counsel and PGCPS External Counsel. Moreover, when identified as a witness in a legal proceeding, arbitration, appeal or similar, identified witnesses are expected to make themselves available and be cooperative. Failure to cooperate with an investigation may be grounds for corrective action.

Administrative Leave or Temporary Placement

Any suspicion of inappropriate behavior by an employee may be reason for placing the employee on administrative leave or temporary placement, pending the investigation into the allegations. Cases are reviewed on an individual basis, and generally a recommendation for administrative leave will be made when the allegation involves a physical altercation, similar incident of a serious nature, pending criminal charge, an allegation of a sexual or discriminatory nature, an incident that might impact the operations of the of the worksite and/or school system, or incident that causes concern for the safety of students, coworkers, and/ or other individuals.

When a request for administrative leave or temporary placement is approved, the ELRO will notify the affected employee via official correspondence. This correspondence will instruct the employee accordingly, including refraining from being on PGCPS property while on administrative leave, and detailing the administrative process followed by the ELRO.

While on administrative leave or temporary placement, instructional staff will be required to continue with lesson planning, entering grades into the student information system, or assisting in the alternative work location, as appropriate.

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Title IX Reporting Information

PGCPS's Title IX Coordinator manages PGCPS's response to reports or complaints of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and dating violence and oversees PGCPS's compliance with Title IX:

Steven Alfred Esq., ***Title IX Coordinator***

Phone: 301-952-6156 | Email: equity@pgcps.org

Mail: 14201 School Lane, Room 201F, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

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