

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education
Upper Marlboro, Maryland

5211
Policy No.

BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY

STUDENTS

STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS

I. POLICY STATEMENT

The Board of Education is committed to providing an educational system which enables students to constructively express their rights to speech and assembly. The Board believes that defined means through which to foster student activism in the school setting is conducive to the development of students as informed and engaged members of society. The Board believes in effective student voice practices which are designed to elevate student activism and participation through civil discourse. To this end, the Board's student demonstration policy sets forth the encouragement of student voice practices to engage the student body population in a way that is fair, equitable, and consistent.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to establish the parameters by which students have the right to engage in civil discourse through the means of peaceful demonstrations.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Civil Discourse - Engagement in conversation intended to enhance understanding of a situation.
- B. Disruption - An action that directly interferes in the operations of the school.
- C. Hate Speech - Any kind of communication in speech, writing or behavior, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group based on who they are.
- D. Liable - The state of being responsible for something, especially by law.
- E. Ombudsman – The Area Office Superintendent appointed to investigate individuals' complaints against the administration.

- F. Spontaneous Demonstration - A demonstration that did not provide previous notice to the school administration.
- G. Student Activism - Work by students to cause political, environmental, economic, or social change.
- H. Student Demonstration - An organized assembly of students peacefully expressing a position with the aim of raising awareness or advocating for change from the status quo or with the intended purpose to bring attention to an issue unique to the body of individuals participating in the demonstration.
- I. Student Organization - A student run group on school grounds that is established, ran, and comprised of current students at the school.
- J. Third Party - An organization or entity unaffiliated with Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS).

IV. STANDARDS

- A. This policy applies to all students while on school property, during a school-related activity, and/or otherwise subject to the authority of the PGCPS. This includes, but is not limited to, school buses, bus stops, school-sponsored events, field trips, athletic functions, and any other activity where school administrators have jurisdiction over students.
- B. The Student Code of Conduct in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook will establish the standards for student behavior and disciplinary consequences for violations of those standards.
- C. No matter the demonstration, all members of the community are expected to conduct themselves with personal integrity and respect for the rights, differences, and dignity of others. Hate speech and relative offensive conduct is strictly prohibited under this policy.
- D. A student or student-led group of the school must be the designated organizer for the event.
 - 1. No third-party group should enter school grounds for the demonstration.
 - 2. Third party provided resources are permitted, however, they must be reviewed and approved by the designated administrator or teacher before distributed at the demonstration.
- E. The organizer(s) must meet with the school administration to coordinate the planned event and is encouraged to schedule this meeting well in advance. The planned demonstration may be scheduled no fewer than two school days after this meeting.

The meeting will be to review the details of the proposed demonstration which includes, but is not limited to, proposed time, place, manner and planned size. If the

organizer(s) plans the event on behalf of a recognized club or organization, an advisor to the club or organization shall attend this meeting as well.

1. Administration must provide for students the right to choose the means of demonstration.
 2. Except in the case of a safety risk or other infringement of the Student Code of Conduct, the administration shall approve a demonstration on any other grounds.
 3. The timing and length of the planned demonstration shall be decided through negotiation between the student organizers and the administration, in the same way as all other details.
- F. In the situation whereby the school administration opposes the student demonstration, the student representative(s) have the right to appeal this decision to the Area Office Superintendent, who will serve as the Ombudsman for this policy.
- G. The school administration is required to communicate with staff members about the demonstration(s) being organized no less than one day in advance.
- H. Faculty are not allowed to punish students who wish to participate in demonstrations approved by the school administration.
- I. Academic makeup work will be permitted in accordance with Administrative Procedure 5113.
- J. It is the student or student organization's responsibility to garner support for the demonstration, not that of the school, school staff, or the administration.
- K. The school, administration and PGCPSS assumes no responsibility or endorsement of the demonstration.
- L. In accordance with the Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 26-101, a person may not cause a disruption of the regular and orderly conduct of activities, administration, or classes at a public school. A person who violates this provision may be liable for a fine or conviction under state law.
- M. If a planned demonstration or the actions of the demonstration are not in accordance with this policy, any referenced policy, or the plan decided upon between the students and administration (or individual to whom the students appealed the administration's decision), disciplinary actions may be sought out in pursuance with the Code of Student Conduct.
- N. Should an emergency transpire that would risk the safety of students and staff during the planned demonstration, the public school system reserves the right to postpone the demonstration to a later date to be agreed upon in the same planning meeting method (see IV.E.)

- O. If there is to be a spontaneous demonstration held due to a quickly sparked matter, students may still exercise their right to assembly but with the risk of disciplinary action taking place.

V. IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The Chief of School Leadership and Support will serve as the Chief Executive Officer's designee to ensure staff receive training and resources necessary to implement this policy.
- B. The Chief of School Leadership and Support will notify all school administrators annually of any provisions that may occur with this policy.
- C. The Chief of School Leadership and Support will ensure students, parents, school security personnel, and staff members are notified of any provisions that take place in this policy.
- D. Students will comply with all school rules and procedures and will exhibit the expected student behaviors delineated in the Student Code of Conduct.

VI. REFERENCES

Maryland Code, Education Article section 26-101

Board Policy 5113 – Student Attendance, Absence and Truancy

Administrative Procedure 5113, Student Attendance Absence and Truancy

Administrative Procedure 10101 - Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook

“Students’ Rights to Demonstrate in Schools” – Maryland Student Coalition, 2019-2021

VII. HISTORY

Policy Adopted 07/28/21